

developer

// Step by step

# Microsoft Visual C# 2013

Intermediate



John Sharp

# **Microsoft Visual C# 2013 Step by Step**

**John Sharp**

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# Introduction

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Microsoft Visual C# is a powerful but simple language aimed primarily at developers creating applications by using the Microsoft .NET Framework. It inherits many of the best features of C++ and Microsoft Visual Basic, but few of the inconsistencies and anachronisms, resulting in a cleaner and more logical language. C# 1.0 made its public debut in 2001. The advent of C# 2.0 with Visual Studio 2005 saw several important new features added to the language, including generics, iterators, and anonymous methods. C# 3.0, which was released with Visual Studio 2008, added extension methods, lambda expressions, and most famously of all, the Language-Integrated Query facility, or LINQ. C# 4.0, released in 2010, provided further enhancements that improve its interoperability with other languages and technologies. These features included support for named and optional arguments, and the dynamic type, which indicates that the language runtime should implement late binding for an object. An important addition in the .NET Framework released concurrently with C# 4.0 was the classes and types that constitute the Task Parallel Library (TPL). Using the TPL, you can build highly scalable applications that can take full advantage of multicore processors quickly and easily. C# 5.0 adds native support for asynchronous task-based processing through the `async` method modifier and the `await` operator.

Another key event for Microsoft has been the launch of Windows 8. This new version of Windows supports highly interactive applications that can share data and collaborate with each other as well as connect to services running in the cloud. The development environment provided by Microsoft Visual Studio 2012 made all these powerful features easy to use, and the many new wizards and enhancements included in Visual Studio 2012 can greatly improve your productivity as a developer.

After listening to feedback from developers, Microsoft modified some aspects of the way in which the user interface works and released a technical preview of Windows 8.1 containing these changes. At the same time, Microsoft released a new edition of Visual Studio 2012, containing incremental changes to Visual



preview edition of Visual Studio 2013, containing incremental changes to Visual Studio 2012 and adding new features that help to further improve programmer productivity. Although many of the updates to Visual Studio are small, and there have been no changes to the C# language in this release, we felt that the modifications to the way in which Windows 8.1 handles the user interface would make it beneficial to perform a similar incremental update to this book. The result is this volume.

#### NOTE

This book is based on the Technical Preview of Visual Studio 2013. Consequently, some features of the IDE might change in the final release of the software.

## Who should read this book

This book assumes that you are a developer who wants to learn the fundamentals of programming with C# by using Visual Studio 2013 and the .NET Framework version 4.5.1. By the time you complete this book, you will have a thorough understanding of C# and will have used it to build responsive and scalable applications that can run by using the Windows operating system.

You can build and run C# 5.0 applications on Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1, although the user interfaces provided by Windows 7 and Windows 8 have some significant differences. Additionally, Windows 8.1 has modified some parts of the user interface model, and applications designed to take advantage of these changes might not run on Windows 8. Consequently, **Part I** **Part II** **Part III** of this book provide exercises and working examples that run using Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1. **Part IV** focuses on the application development model used by Windows 8.1, and the material in this section provides an introduction to building interactive applications for this new platform.

## Who should not read this book

This book is aimed at developers new to C#, but not completely new to programming. As such, it concentrates primarily on the C# language. This book

is not intended to provide detailed coverage of the multitude of technologies available for building enterprise-level applications for Windows, such as ADO.NET, ASP.NET, Windows Communication Foundation, or Workflow Foundation. If you require more information on any of these items, you might consider reading some of the other titles in the Step by Step for Developers series available from Microsoft Press, such as *Microsoft ASP.NET 4 Step by Step* by George Shepherd, *Microsoft ADO.NET 4 Step By Step* by Tim Patrick, and *Microsoft Windows Communication Foundation 4 Step By Step* by John Sharp.

## Organization of this book

This book is divided into four sections:

- **Part I** provides an introduction to the core syntax of the C# language and the Visual Studio programming environment.
- **Part II** goes into detail on how to create and manage new types by using C#, and how to manage the resources referenced by these types.
- **Part III** includes extended coverage of the elements that C# provides for building types that you can reuse across multiple applications.
- **Part IV** describes the Windows 8.1 programming model, and how you can use C# to build interactive applications for this new model.

### NOTE

Although **Part IV** is aimed at Windows 8.1, many of the concepts described in **Chapter 23** and **Chapter 24** are also applicable to Windows 8 and Windows 7 applications.

## Finding your best starting point in this book

This book is designed to help you build skills in a number of essential areas. You can use this book if you are new to programming or if you are switching from another programming language such as C, C++, Java, or Visual Basic. Use the following table to find your best starting point.

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If you are	Follow these steps
New to object-oriented programming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install the practice files as described in the upcoming section, <b>Code samples</b>.</li> <li>2. Work through the chapters in <b>Part I</b>, <b>Part II</b>, and <b>Part III</b> sequentially.</li> <li>3. Complete <b>Part IV</b> as your level of experience and interest dictates.</li> </ol>
Familiar with procedural programming languages such as C but new to C#	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install the practice files as described in the upcoming section, <b>Code samples</b>. Skim the first five chapters to get an overview of C# and Visual Studio 2013, and then concentrate on <b>Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Chapter 8 Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 11 Chapter 12 Chapter 13 Chapter 14 Chapter 15 Chapter 16 Chapter 17 Chapter 18 Chapter 19 Chapter 20 Chapter 21 Chapter 22</b>.</li> <li>2. Complete <b>Part IV</b> as your level of experience and interest dictates.</li> </ol>
Migrating from an object-oriented language such as C++ or Java	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install the practice files as described in the upcoming section, <b>Code samples</b>.</li> <li>2. Skim the first seven chapters to get an overview of C# and Visual Studio 2013, and then concentrate on <b>Chapter 7 Chapter 8 Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 11 Chapter 12 Chapter 13 Chapter 14 Chapter 15 Chapter 16 Chapter 17 Chapter 18 Chapter 19 Chapter 20 Chapter 21 Chapter 22</b>.</li> <li>3. For information about building scalable Windows 8.1 applications, read <b>Part IV</b>.</li> </ol>
Switching from Visual Basic to C#	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install the practice files as described in the upcoming section, <b>Code samples</b>.</li> <li>2. Work through the chapters in <b>Part I</b>, <b>Part II</b>, and <b>Part III</b> sequentially.</li> <li>3. For information about building Windows 8.1 applications, read <b>Part IV</b>.</li> <li>4. Read the Quick Reference sections at the end of the chapters for information about specific C# and Visual Studio 2013 constructs.</li> </ol>
Referencing the book after working through the exercises	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use the index or the table of contents to find information about particular subjects.</li> <li>2. Read the Quick Reference sections at the end of each chapter to find a brief review of the syntax and techniques presented in the chapter.</li> </ol>

Most of the book's chapters include hands-on samples that let you try out the

concepts just learned. No matter which sections you choose to focus on, be sure to download and install the sample applications on your system.

## Conventions and features in this book

This book presents information by using conventions designed to make the information readable and easy to follow.

- Each exercise consists of a series of tasks, presented as numbered steps (1, 2, and so on) listing each action you must take to complete the exercise.
- Boxed elements with labels such as “Note” provide additional information or alternative methods for completing a step successfully.
- Text that you type (apart from code blocks) appears in bold.
- A plus sign (+) between two key names means that you must press those keys at the same time. For example, “Press Alt+Tab” means that you hold down the Alt key while you press the Tab key.
- A vertical bar between two or more menu items (for example, File | Close) means that you should select the first menu or menu item, then the next, and so on.

## System requirements

You will need the following hardware and software to complete the practice exercises in this book:

- Windows 7 (x86 and x64), Windows 8 (x86 and x64), Windows 8.1 (x86 and x64), Windows Server 2008 R2 SP1 (x64), Windows Server 2012 (x64), or Windows Server 2012 R2 (x64).

### IMPORTANT

The Windows Store templates for Visual Studio 2013 are not available on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Server 2012, or Windows Server 2008 R2. If you want to use these templates or perform the exercises that build Windows Store apps, you must be running Windows 8.1 or Windows Server 2012 R2.

- Visual Studio 2013 (any edition except Visual Studio Express for Windows 8.1).

#### IMPORTANT

You can use Visual Studio Express 2013 for Windows Desktop, but you can only perform the Windows 7 version of the exercises in this book by using this software. You cannot use this software to perform the exercises in **Part IV** of this book.

- Computer that has a 1.6 GHz or faster processor (2 GHz recommended).
- 1 GB (32-bit) or 2 GB (64-bit) RAM (add 512 MB if running in a virtual machine).
- 10 GB of available hard disk space.
- 5400 RPM hard disk drive.
- DirectX 9 capable video card running at 1024 × 768 or higher resolution display; If you are using Windows 8.1, a resolution of 1366 × 768 or greater is recommended.
- DVD-ROM drive (if installing Visual Studio from a DVD).
- Internet connection to download software or chapter examples.

Depending on your Windows configuration, you might require Local Administrator rights to install or configure Visual Studio 2013.

## Code samples

Most of the chapters in this book include exercises with which you can interactively try out new material learned in the main text. You can download all sample projects, in both their pre-exercise and postexercise formats, from the following page:

<http://aka.ms/VC2013SbS/files>

Follow the instructions to download the C#\_SBS.zip file.

#### NOTE

In addition to the code samples, your system should have Visual Studio 2013 installed. If available, install the latest service packs for Windows and Visual Studio.

## Installing the code samples

Follow these steps to install the code samples on your computer so that you can use them with the exercises in this book.

1. Unzip the C#\_SBS.zip file that you downloaded from the book's website into your Documents folder.
2. If prompted, review the displayed end user license agreement. If you accept the terms, select the accept option, and then click Next.

#### NOTE

If the license agreement doesn't appear, you can access it from the same webpage from which you downloaded the C#\_SBS.zip file.

## Using the code samples

Each chapter in this book explains when and how to use any code samples for that chapter. When it's time to use a code sample, the book will list the instructions for how to open the files.

For those of you who like to know all the details, here's a list of the code sample Visual Studio 2013 projects and solutions, grouped by the folders where you can find them. In many cases, the exercises provide starter files and completed versions of the same projects that you can use as a reference. The code samples provide versions of the code for Window 7 and Windows 8.1, and the exercise instructions call out any differences in the tasks that you need to perform or the code that you need to write for these two operating systems. The completed projects for each chapter are stored in folders with the suffix "- Complete".

### IMPORTANT

If you are using Windows 8, Windows Server 2012 or Windows Server 2008 R2, follow the instructions for Windows 7. If you are using Windows Server 2012 R2, follow the instructions for Windows 8.1.

Project	Description
<b>Chapter 1</b>	
TextHello	This project gets you started. It steps through the creation of a simple program that displays a text-based greeting.
WPFHello	This project displays the greeting in a window by using Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF).
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
PrimitiveDataTypes	This project demonstrates how to declare variables by using each of the primitive types, how to assign values to these variables, and how to display their values in a window.
MathsOperators	This program introduces the arithmetic operators (+ – * / %).
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
Methods	In this project, you'll re-examine the code in the previous project and investigate how it uses methods to structure the code.
DailyRate	This project walks you through writing your own methods, running the methods, and stepping through the method calls by using the Visual Studio 2013 debugger.
DailyRate Using Optional Parameters	This project shows you how to define a method that takes optional parameters and call the method by using named arguments.
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
Selection	This project shows you how to use a cascading <i>if</i> statement to implement complex logic, such as comparing the equivalence of two dates.
SwitchStatement	This simple program uses a <i>switch</i> statement to convert characters into their XML representations.
<b>Chapter 5</b>	

WhileStatement	This project demonstrates a <i>while</i> statement that reads the contents of a source file one line at a time and displays each line in a text box on a form.
DoStatement	This project uses a <i>do</i> statement to convert a decimal number to its octal representation.
<b>Chapter 6</b>	
MathsOperators	This project revisits the MathsOperators project from <b>Chapter 2</b> and shows how various unhandled exceptions can make the program fail. The <i>try</i> and <i>catch</i> keywords then make the application more robust so that it no longer fails.
<b>Chapter 7</b>	
Classes	This project covers the basics of defining your own classes, complete with public constructors, methods, and private fields. It also shows how to create class instances by using the <i>new</i> keyword and how to define static methods and fields.
<b>Chapter 8</b>	
Parameters	This program investigates the difference between value parameters and reference parameters. It demonstrates how to use the <i>ref</i> and <i>out</i> keywords.
<b>Chapter 9</b>	
StructsAndEnums	This project defines a <i>struct</i> type to represent a calendar date.
<b>Chapter 10</b>	
Cards	This project shows how to use arrays to model hands of cards in a card game.
<b>Chapter 11</b>	
ParamsArrays	This project demonstrates how to use the <i>params</i> keyword to create a single method that can accept any number of <i>int</i> arguments.
<b>Chapter 12</b>	
Vehicles	This project creates a simple hierarchy of vehicle classes by using inheritance. It also demonstrates how to define a virtual method.
ExtensionMethod	This project shows how to create an extension method for the <i>int</i> type, providing a method that converts an integer value from base 10 to a different number base.



<b>Chapter 13</b>	
Drawing Using Interfaces	This project implements part of a graphical drawing package. The project uses interfaces to define the methods that drawing shapes expose and implement.
Drawing Using Abstract Classes	This project extends the Drawing Using Interfaces project to factor common functionality for shape objects into abstract classes.
<b>Chapter 14</b>	
GarbageCollectionDemo	This project shows how to implement exception-safe disposal of resources by using the Dispose pattern.
<b>Chapter 15</b>	
Drawing Using Properties	This project extends the application in the Drawing Using Abstract Classes project developed in <b>Chapter 13</b> to encapsulate data in a class by using properties.
AutomaticProperties	This project shows how to create automatic properties for a class and use them to initialize instances of the class.
<b>Chapter 16</b>	
Indexers	This project uses two indexers: one to look up a person's phone number when given a name and the other to look up a person's name when given a phone number.
<b>Chapter 17</b>	
BinaryTree	This solution shows you how to use generics to build a <i>typesafe</i> structure that can contain elements of any type.
BuildTree	This project demonstrates how to use generics to implement a <i>typesafe</i> method that can take parameters of any type.
<b>Chapter 18</b>	
Cards	This project updates the code from <b>Chapter 10</b> to show how to use collections to model hands of cards in a card game.
<b>Chapter 19</b>	
BinaryTree	This project shows you how to implement the generic <i>IEnumerator&lt;T&gt;</i> interface to create an enumerator for the generic <i>Tree</i> class.
IteratorBinaryTree	This solution uses an iterator to generate an enumerator for the generic <i>Tree</i> class.

<b>Chapter 20</b>	
Delegates	This project shows how to decouple a method from the application logic that invokes it by using a delegate.
Delegates With Event	This project shows how to use an event to alert an object to a significant occurrence, and how to catch an event and perform any processing required.
<b>Chapter 21</b>	
QueryBinaryTree	This project shows how to use LINQ queries to retrieve data from a binary tree object.
<b>Chapter 22</b>	
ComplexNumbers	This project defines a new type that models complex numbers and implements common operators for this type.
<b>Chapter 23</b>	
GraphDemo	This project generates and displays a complex graph on a WPF form. It uses a single thread to perform the calculations.
GraphDemo With Tasks	This version of the GraphDemo project creates multiple tasks to perform the calculations for the graph in parallel.
Parallel GraphDemo	This version of the GraphDemo project uses the <i>Parallel</i> class to abstract out the process of creating and managing tasks.
GraphDemo With Cancellation	This project shows how to implement cancellation to halt tasks in a controlled manner before they have completed.
ParallelLoop	This application provides an example showing when you should not use the <i>Parallel</i> class to create and run tasks.
<b>Chapter 24</b>	
GraphDemo	This is a version of the GraphDemo project from <b>Chapter 23</b> that uses the <i>async</i> keyword and the <i>await</i> operator to perform the calculations that generate the graph data asynchronously.
PLINQ	This project shows some examples of using PLINQ to query data by using parallel tasks.
CalculatePI	This project uses a statistical sampling algorithm to calculate an approximation for pi. It uses parallel tasks.

<b>Chapter 25</b>	
Customers Without Scalable UI	This project uses the default Grid control to lay out the user interface for the Adventure Works Customers application. The user interface uses absolute positioning for the controls and does not scale to different screen resolutions and form factors.
Customers With Scalable UI	This project uses nested Grid controls with row and column definitions to enable relative positioning of controls. This version of the user interface scales to different screen resolutions and form factors, but it does not adapt well to Snapped view.
Customers With Adaptive UI	This project extends the version with the scalable user interface. It uses the Visual State Manager to detect whether the application is running in Snapped view, and it changes the layout of the controls accordingly.
Customers With Styles	This version of the Customers project uses XAML styling to change the font and background image displayed by the application.
<b>Chapter 26</b>	
DataBinding	This project uses data-binding to display customer information retrieved from a data source in the user interface. It also shows how to implement the INotifyPropertyChanged interface so that the user interface can update customer information and send these changes back to the data source.
ViewModel	This version of the Customers project separates the user interface from the logic that accesses the data source by implementing the Model-View-ViewModel pattern.
Search	This project implements the Windows 8.1 Search contract. A user can search for customers by first name or last name.
<b>Chapter 27</b>	
Web Service	This solution includes a web application that provides an ASP.NET Web API web service that the Customers application uses to retrieve customer data from a SQL Server database. The web service uses an entity model created by using the Entity Framework to access the database.
Updatable ViewModel	The Customers project in this solution contains an extended ViewModel with commands that enable the user interface to insert and update customer information by using the WCF Data Service.

## Acknowledgments

Despite the fact that my name is on the cover, authoring a book such as this is far from a one-man project. I'd like to thank the following people who have

from a one-man project. I'd like to thank the following people who have provided unstinting support and assistance throughout this rather protracted exercise.

First, Russell Jones, who first alerted me to the impending release of the Windows 8.1 and Visual Studio 2013 technical previews. He managed to expedite the entire process of getting this edition of the book ready to go to print. Without his efforts you might have been reading this edition just as the next edition of Windows emerged.

Next, Mike Sumsion and Paul Barnes, my esteemed colleagues at Content Master, who performed sterling work reviewing the material for the original versions of each chapter, testing my code, and pointing out the numerous mistakes that I had made! I think I have now caught them all, but of course any errors that remain are entirely my responsibility.

Also, John Mueller, who has done a remarkable job in performing a very swift technical review of this edition. His writing experience and understanding of the technologies covered herein have been extremely helpful, and this book has been enriched by his efforts.

Of course, like many programmers, I might understand the technology but my prose is not always as fluent or clear as it could be. I would like to thank the editors for correcting my grammar, fixing my spelling, and generally making my material much easier to understand.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife and cricketing companion, Diana, for not frowning too much when I said I was about to start work on an updated edition of this book. She has now become used to my cranky mutterings while I debug code, and the numerous “d’ohs” that I emit when I realize the crass mistakes I have made.

## Errata and book support

We've made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this book and its companion content. Any errors that have been reported since this book was published are listed on our Microsoft Press site at [oreilly.com](http://aka.ms/VC2013SbS/errata):

<http://aka.ms/VC2013SbS/errata>

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# **Part I. Introducing Microsoft Visual C# and Microsoft Visual Studio 2013**

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Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

# Chapter 1. Welcome to C#

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After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **Beginning programming with the Visual Studio 2013 environment**
- Create a C# console application.
- **Using namespaces**
- **Creating a graphical application**

This chapter provides an introduction to Visual Studio 2013, the programming environment, and toolset designed to help you build applications for Microsoft Windows. Visual Studio 2013 is the ideal tool for writing C# code, and it provides many features that you will learn about as you progress through this book. In this chapter, you will use Visual Studio 2013 to build some simple C# applications and get started on the path to building highly functional solutions for Windows.

## **Beginning programming with the Visual Studio 2013 environment**

Visual Studio 2013 is a tool-rich programming environment containing the functionality that you need to create large or small C# projects running on Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1. You can even construct projects that seamlessly combine modules written in different programming languages such as C++, Visual Basic, and F#. In the first exercise, you will open the Visual Studio 2013 programming environment and learn how to create a console application.

NOTE

A console application is an application that runs in a command prompt window rather than providing a graphical user interface (GUI).

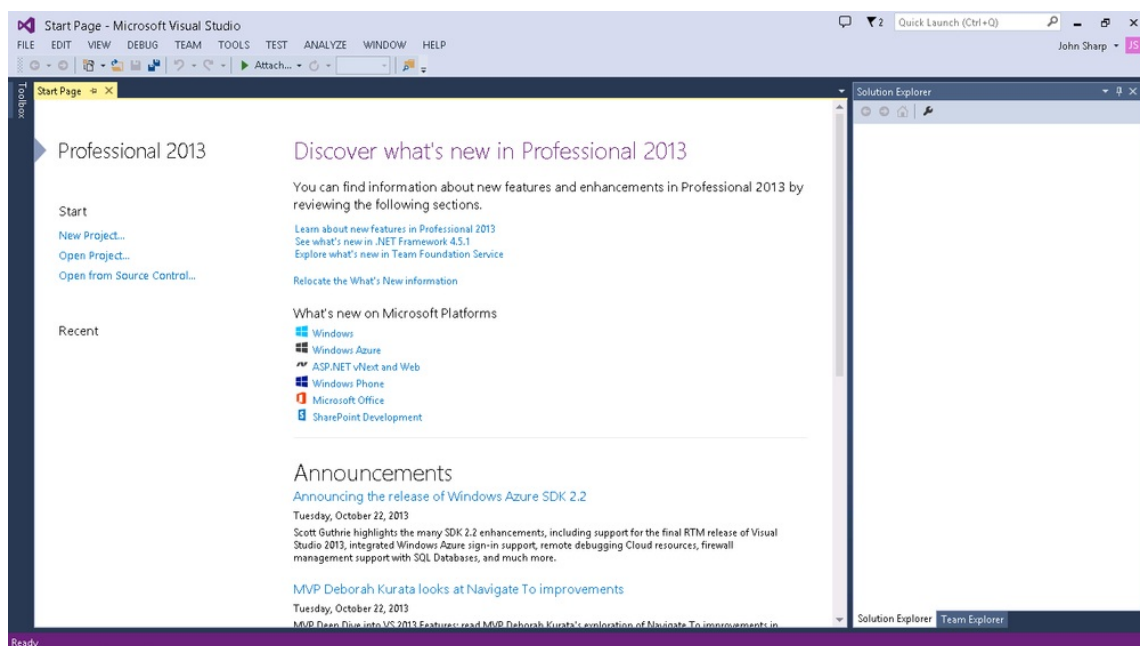
## Create a console application in Visual Studio 2013

- If you are using Windows 8.1 or Windows 8, on the Start screen, type **Visual Studio**, and then, in the Search results pane, click Visual Studio 2013.

### NOTE

On Windows 8 and Windows 8.1, to find an application, you can literally type the application name (such as Visual Studio) in any blank part of the Start screen, away from any tiles. The Search results pane will appear automatically.

Visual Studio 2013 starts and displays the Start page, similar to the following (your Start page might be different, depending on the edition of Visual Studio 2013 you are using).



### NOTE

If this is the first time you have run Visual Studio 2013, you might see a dialog box prompting you to choose your default development environment settings. Visual Studio 2013 can tailor itself according to your preferred development language. The default selections for the various dialog boxes and tools in the integrated development



environment (IDE) are set for the language you choose. From the list, select Visual C# Development Settings and then click the Start Visual Studio button. After a short delay, the Visual Studio 2013 IDE appears.

- If you are using Windows 7, perform the following operations to start Visual Studio 2013:
  1. On the Windows taskbar, click the Start button, click All Programs, and then click the Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 program group.
  2. In the Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 program group, click Visual Studio 2013.

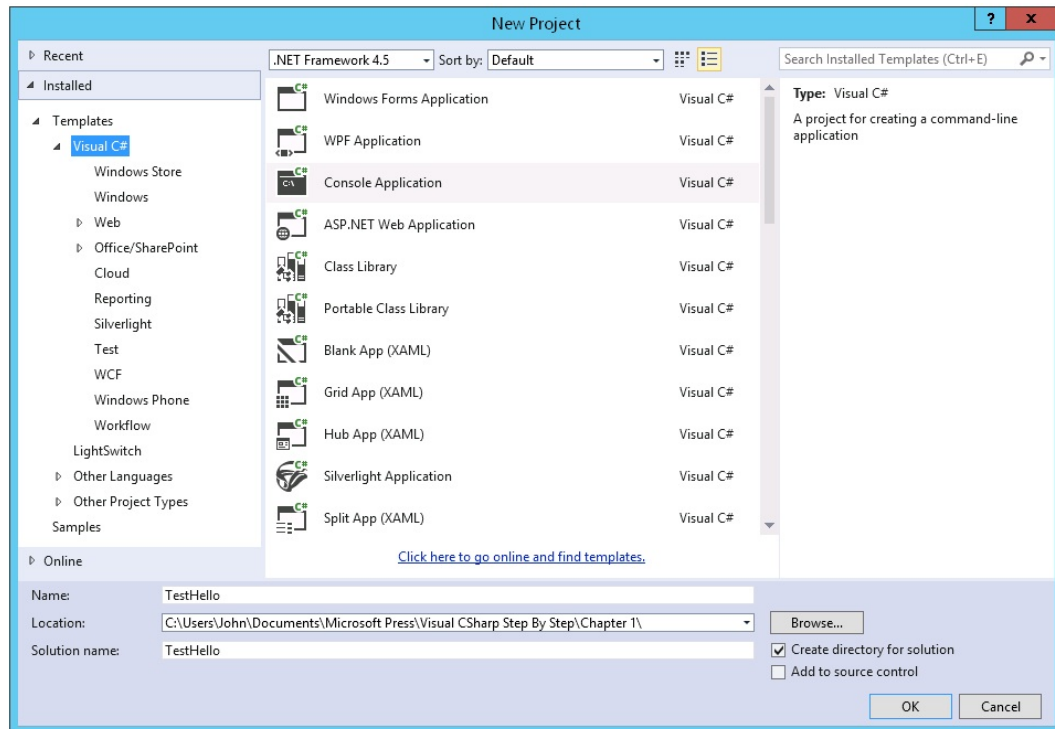
Visual Studio 2013 starts and displays the Start page.

#### NOTE

To avoid repetition and save space, throughout this book, I will simply state “Start Visual Studio” when you need to open Visual Studio 2013, regardless of the operating system you are using.

- Perform the following tasks to create a new console application:
  1. On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project.

The New Project dialog box opens. This dialog box lists the templates that you can use as a starting point for building an application. The dialog box categorizes templates according to the programming language you are using and the type of application.
  2. In the left pane, in the Templates section, click Visual C#. In the middle pane, verify that the combo box at the top of the pane displays the text .NET Framework 4.5, and then click the Console Application icon.



3. In the Location box, type **C:\Users\YourName\Documents\Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 1**. Replace the text *YourName* in this path with your Windows user name.

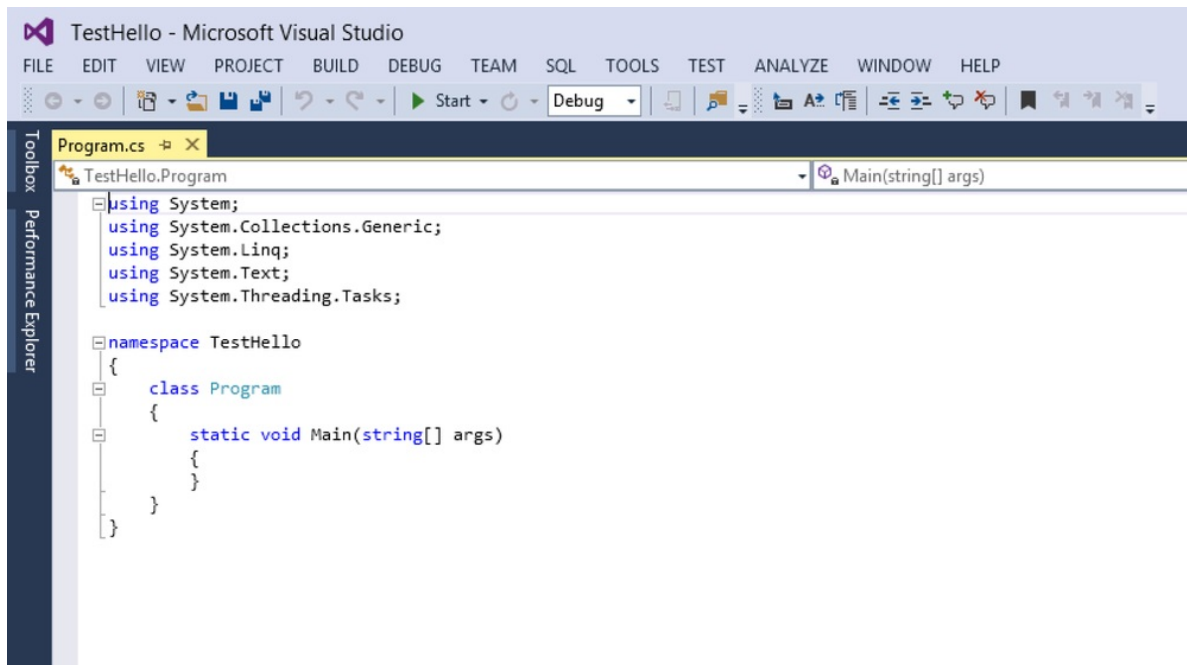
#### NOTE

To avoid repetition and save space, throughout the rest of this book, I will refer to the path C:\Users\YourName\Documents simply as your Documents folder.

Tip If the folder you specify does not exist, Visual Studio 2013 creates it for you.

4. In the Name box, type **TestHello** (type over the existing name, ConsoleApplication1).
5. Ensure that the Create Directory For Solution check box is selected, and then click OK.

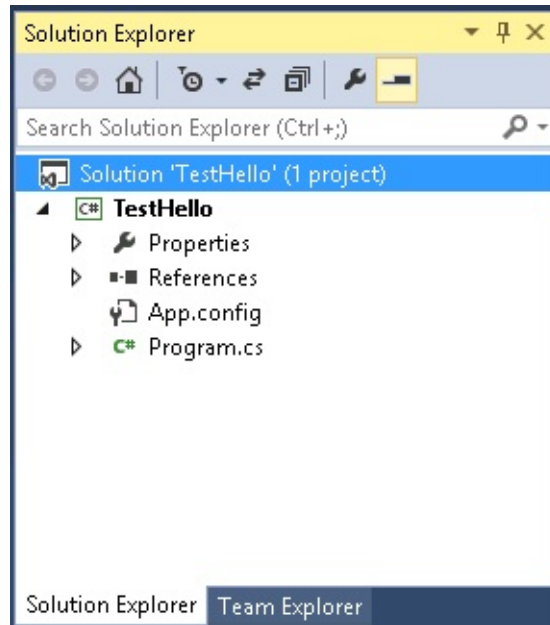
Visual Studio creates the project using the Console Application template and displays the starter code for the project, like this:



The menu bar at the top of the screen provides access to the features you'll use in the programming environment. You can use the keyboard or the mouse to access the menus and commands, exactly as you can in all Windows-based programs. The toolbar is located beneath the menu bar. It provides button shortcuts to run the most frequently used commands.

The Code and Text Editor window occupying the main part of the screen displays the contents of source files. In a multifile project, when you edit more than one file, each source file has its own tab labeled with the name of the source file. You can click the tab to bring the named source file to the foreground in the Code and Text Editor window.

The Solution Explorer pane appears on the right side of the dialog box:



Solution Explorer displays the names of the files associated with the project, among other items. You can also double-click a file name in the Solution Explorer pane to bring that source file to the foreground in the Code and Text Editor window.

Before writing the code, examine the files listed in Solution Explorer, which Visual Studio 2013 has created as part of your project:

- **Solution ‘TestHello’.** This is the top-level solution file. Each application contains a single solution file. A solution can contain one or more projects, and Visual Studio 2013 creates the solution file to help organize these projects. If you use Windows Explorer to look at your Documents\Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 1\TestHello folder, you’ll see that the actual name of this file is TestHello.sln.
- **TestHello.** This is the C# project file. Each project file references one or more files containing the source code and other artifacts for the project, such as graphics images. You must write all the source code in a single project in the same programming language. In Windows Explorer, this file is actually called TestHello.csproj, and it is stored in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 1\TestHello\TestHello folder in your Documents folder.
- **Properties.** This is a folder in the TestHello project. If you expand it (click

the arrow next to Properties), you will see that it contains a file called `AssemblyInfo.cs`. `AssemblyInfo.cs` is a special file that you can use to add attributes to a program, such as the name of the author, the date the program was written, and so on. You can specify additional attributes to modify the way in which the program runs. Explaining how to use these attributes is beyond the scope of this book.

- **References.** This folder contains references to libraries of compiled code that your application can use. When your C# code is compiled, it is converted into a library and given a unique name. In the Microsoft .NET Framework, these libraries are called *assemblies*. Developers use assemblies to package useful functionality that they have written so that they can distribute it to other developers who might want to use these features in their own applications. If you expand the References folder, you will see the default set of references that Visual Studio 2013 adds to your project. These assemblies provide access to many of the commonly used features of the .NET Framework and are provided by Microsoft with Visual Studio 2013. You will learn about many of these assemblies as you progress through the exercises in this book.
- **App.config.** This is the application configuration file. It is optional, and it might not always be present. You can specify settings that your application can use at run time to modify its behavior, such as the version of the .NET Framework to use to run the application. You will learn more about this file in later chapters of this book.
- **Program.cs.** This is a C# source file, and it is displayed in the Code and Text Editor window when the project is first created. You will write your code for the console application in this file. It also contains some code that Visual Studio 2013 provides automatically, which you will examine shortly.

## Writing your first program

The `Program.cs` file defines a class called *Program* that contains a method called *Main*. In C#, all executable code must be defined within a method, and all methods must belong to a class or a *struct*. You will learn more about classes in [Chapter 7](#) and you will learn about structs in [Chapter 9](#).

The *Main* method designates the program’s entry point. This method should be defined in the manner specified in the *Program* class, as a static method; otherwise, the .NET Framework might not recognize it as the starting point for your application when you run it. (You will look at methods in detail in [Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 7](#) provides more information on static methods.)

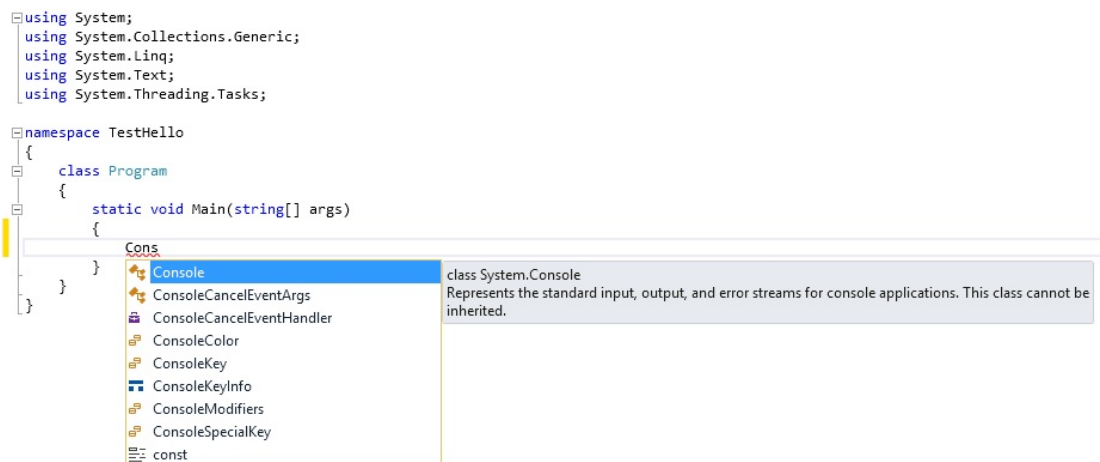
#### IMPORTANT

C# is a case-sensitive language. You must spell *Main* with an uppercase *M*.

In the following exercises, you write the code to display the message “Hello World!” to the console window; you build and run your Hello World console application; and you learn how namespaces are used to partition code elements. Write the code by using Microsoft IntelliSense

1. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the *Program.cs* file, place the cursor in the *Main* method, immediately after the opening brace, {, and then press Enter to create a new line.
2. On the new line, type the word **Console**; this is the name of another class provided by the assemblies referenced by your application. It provides methods for displaying messages in the console window and reading input from the keyboard.

As you type the letter **C** at the start of the word *Console*, an IntelliSense list appears.



This list contains all of the C# keywords and data types that are valid in this context. You can either continue typing or scroll through the list and double-click the *Console* item with the mouse. Alternatively, after you have typed **Cons**, the IntelliSense list automatically homes in on the *Console* item, and you can press the Tab or Enter key to select it.

*Main* should look like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Console
}
```

**NOTE**

*Console* is a built-in class.

3. Type a period immediately following *Console*.

Another IntelliSense list appears, displaying the methods, properties, and fields of the *Console* class.

4. Scroll down through the list, select *WriteLine*, and then press Enter. Alternatively, you can continue typing the characters **W**, **r**, **i**, **t**, **e**, **L** until *WriteLine* is selected, and then press Enter.

The IntelliSense list closes, and the word *WriteLine* is added to the source file. *Main* should now look like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Console.WriteLine
}
```

5. Type an opening parenthesis, (. Another IntelliSense tip appears.

This tip displays the parameters that the *WriteLine* method can take. In fact, *WriteLine* is an *overloaded method*, meaning that the *Console* class contains more than one method named *WriteLine*—it actually provides 19 different versions of this method. You can use each version of the

*WriteLine* method to output different types of data. ([Chapter 3](#) describes overloaded methods in more detail.) *Main* should now look like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Console.WriteLine(
}
```

**TIP**

You can click the up and down arrows in the tip to scroll through the different overloads of *WriteLine*.

6. Type a closing parenthesis, `)`, followed by a semicolon, `;`.

*Main* should now look like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Console.WriteLine();
}
```

7. Move the cursor and type the string **“Hello World!”**, including the quotation marks, between the left and right parentheses following the *WriteLine* method.

*Main* should now look like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Console.WriteLine("Hello World!");
}
```











**TIP**

Get into the habit of typing matched character pairs, such as parentheses, ( and ), and curly brackets, { and }, before filling in their contents. It’s easy to forget the closing character if you wait until after you’ve entered the contents.



## INTELLISENSE ICONS

When you type a period after the name of a class, IntelliSense displays the name of every member of that class. To the left of each member name is an icon that depicts the type of member. Common icons and their types include the following:

Icon	Meaning
	Method (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 3</a> )
	Property (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 15</a> )
	Class (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 7</a> )
	Struct (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 9</a> )
	Enum (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 9</a> )
	Extension method (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 12</a> )
	Interface (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 13</a> )
	Delegate (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 17</a> )
	Event (discussed in <a href="#">Chapter 17</a> )
	Namespace (discussed in the next section of this chapter)

You will also see other IntelliSense icons appear as you type code in different contexts.

You will frequently see lines of code containing two forward slashes (//) followed by ordinary text. These are comments, and they are ignored by the compiler but are very useful for developers because they help document what a program is actually doing. Take for instance the following example:

```
Console.ReadLine(); // Wait for the user to press the Enter key
```

The compiler skips all text from the two slashes to the end of the line. You can also add multiline comments that start with a forward slash followed by an asterisk (/\*). The compiler skips everything until it finds an asterisk followed by a forward slash sequence (\*/), which could be many lines lower down. You are actively encouraged to document your code with as many meaningful comments as necessary.

Build and run the console application

1. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

This action compiles the C# code, resulting in a program that you can run. The Output window appears below the Code and Text Editor window.

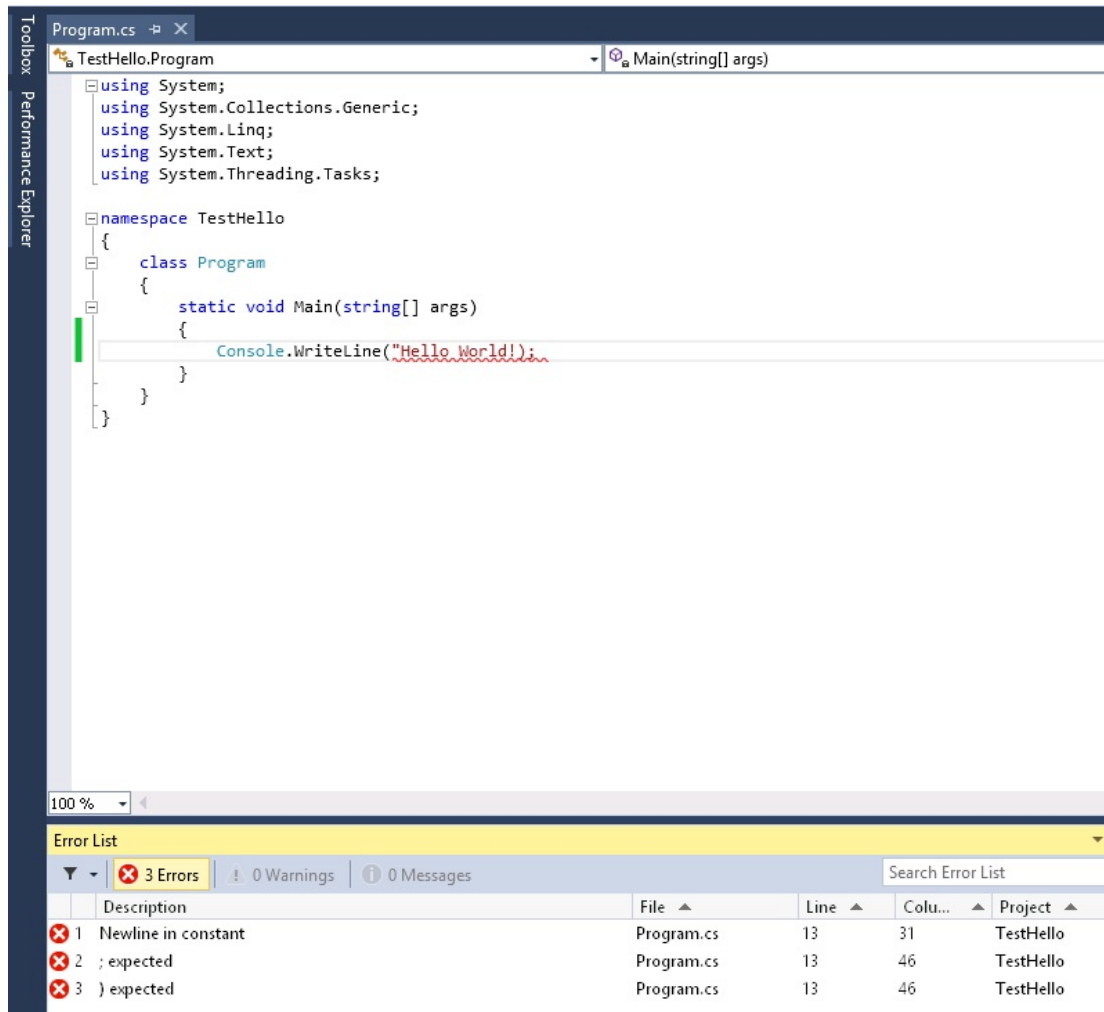
**TIP**

If the Output window does not appear, on the View menu, click Output to display it.

In the Output window, you should see messages similar to the following, indicating how the program is being compiled:

```
1>----- Build started: Project: TestHello, Configuration: Debug Any CPU -----  
-  
1> TestHello -> C:\Users\John\Documents\Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By  
Step\Chapter  
1\TestHello\TestHello\bin\Debug\TestHello.exe  
===== Build: 1 succeeded, 0 failed, 0 up-to-date, 0 skipped =====
```

If you have made any mistakes, they will be reported in the Error List window. The following image shows what happens if you forget to type the closing quotation marks after the text Hello World in the *WriteLine* statement. Notice that a single mistake can sometimes cause multiple compiler errors.



### TIP

To go directly to the line that caused the error, you can double-click an item in the Error List window. You should also notice that Visual Studio displays a wavy red line under any lines of code that will not compile when you enter them.

If you have followed the previous instructions carefully, there should be no errors or warnings, and the program should build successfully.

### TIP

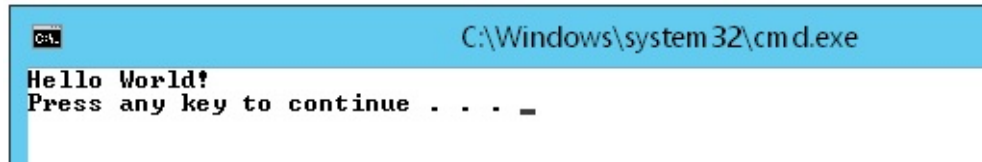
There is no need to save the file explicitly before building because the Build Solution command automatically saves it.

An asterisk after the file name in the tab above the Code and Text Editor window

indicates that the file has been changed since it was last saved.

2. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

A command window opens and the program runs. The message “Hello World!” appears; the program waits for you to press any key, as shown in the following graphic:



```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
Hello World!
Press any key to continue . . . _
```

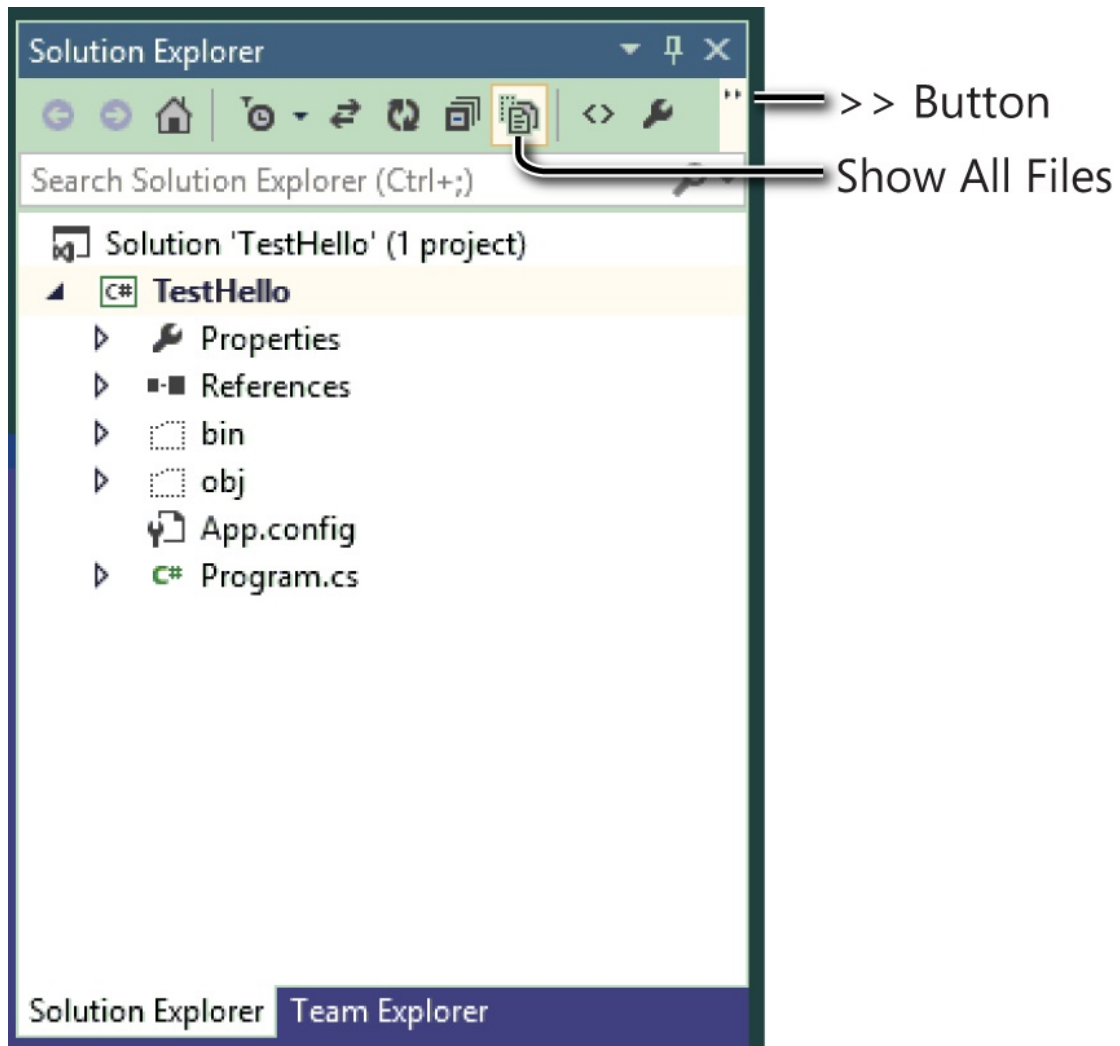
#### NOTE

The prompt “Press any key to continue” is generated by Visual Studio; you did not write any code to do this. If you run the program by using the Start Debugging command on the Debug menu, the application runs, but the command window closes immediately without waiting for you to press a key.

3. Ensure that the command window displaying the program’s output has the focus (meaning that it’s the window that’s currently active), and then press Enter.

The command window closes, and you return to the Visual Studio 2013 programming environment.

4. In Solution Explorer, click the *TestHello* project (not the solution), and then, on the Solution Explorer toolbar, click the Show All Files button. Be aware that you might need to click the double-arrow button on the right edge of the Solution Explorer toolbar to make this button appear.



Entries named *bin* and *obj* appear above the *Program.cs* file. These entries correspond directly to folders named *bin* and *obj* in the project folder (Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 1\TestHello\TestHello). Visual Studio creates these folders when you build your application; they contain the executable version of the program together with some other files used to build and debug the application.

5. In Solution Explorer, expand the *bin* entry.

Another folder named *Debug* appears.

#### NOTE

You might also see a folder named *Release*.

6. In Solution Explorer, expand the Debug folder.

Several more items appear, including a file named *TestHello.exe*. This is the compiled program, which is the file that runs when you click Start Without Debugging on the Debug menu. The other files contain information that is used by Visual Studio 2013 if you run your program in debug mode (when you click Start Debugging on the Debug menu).

## Using namespaces

The example you have seen so far is a very small program. However, small programs can soon grow into much bigger programs. As a program grows, two issues arise. First, it is harder to understand and maintain big programs than it is to understand and maintain smaller ones. Second, more code usually means more classes, with more methods, requiring you to keep track of more names. As the number of names increases, so does the likelihood of the project build failing because two or more names clash; for example, you might try and create two classes with the same name. The situation becomes more complicated when a program references assemblies written by other developers who have also used a variety of names.

In the past, programmers tried to solve the name-clashing problem by prefixing names with some sort of qualifier (or set of qualifiers). This is not a good solution because it's not scalable; names become longer, and you spend less time writing software and more time typing (there is a difference), and reading and rereading incomprehensibly long names.

Namespaces help solve this problem by creating a container for items such as classes. Two classes with the same name will not be confused with each other if they live in different namespaces. You can create a class named *Greeting* inside the namespace named *TestHello* by using the *namespace* keyword like this:

```
namespace TestHello
{
    class Greeting
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

You can then refer to the *Greeting* class as *TestHello.Greeting* in your programs. If another developer also creates a *Greeting* class in a different namespace, such as *NewNamespace*, and you install the assembly that contains this class on your computer, your programs will still work as expected because they are using the *TestHello.Greeting* class. If you want to refer to the other developer's *Greeting* class, you must specify it as *NewNamespace.Greeting*.

It is good practice to define all your classes in namespaces, and the Visual Studio 2013 environment follows this recommendation by using the name of your project as the top-level namespace. The .NET Framework class library also adheres to this recommendation; every class in the .NET Framework lives within a namespace. For example, the *Console* class lives within the *System* namespace. This means that its full name is actually *System.Console*.

Of course, if you had to write the full name of a class every time you used it, the situation would be no better than prefixing qualifiers or even just naming the class with some globally unique name such *SystemConsole*. Fortunately, you can solve this problem with a *using* directive in your programs. If you return to the *TestHello* program in Visual Studio 2013 and look at the file *Program.cs* in the Code and Text Editor window, you will notice the following lines at the top of the file:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.Linq;
using System.Text;
using System.Threading.Tasks;
```

These lines are *using* directives. A *using* directive brings a namespace into scope. In subsequent code in the same file, you no longer need to explicitly qualify objects with the namespace to which they belong. The five namespaces shown contain classes that are used so often that Visual Studio 2013 automatically adds these *using* statements every time you create a new project. You can add further *using* directives to the top of a source file if you need to reference other namespaces.

The following exercise demonstrates the concept of namespaces in more depth. Try longhand names

1. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the *Program.cs* file,

comment out the first *using* directive at the top of the file, like this:

```
//using System;
```

2. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

The build fails, and the Error List window displays the following error message:

```
The name 'Console' does not exist in the current context.
```

3. In the Error List window, double-click the error message.

The identifier that caused the error is highlighted in the *Program.cs* source file.

4. In the Code and Text Editor window, edit the *Main* method to use the fully qualified name *System.Console*.

*Main* should look like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    System. Console.WriteLine("Hello World!");
}
```

#### NOTE

When you type the period after *System*, IntelliSense displays the names of all the items in the *System* namespace.

5. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

The project should build successfully this time. If it doesn't, ensure that *Main* is exactly as it appears in the preceding code, and then try building again.

6. Run the application to ensure that it still works by clicking Start Without Debugging on the Debug menu.



7. When the program runs and displays “Hello World!”, in the console window, press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.

### NAMESPACES AND ASSEMBLIES

A *using* directive simply brings the items in a namespace into scope and frees you from having to fully qualify the names of classes in your code. Classes are compiled into *assemblies*. An assembly is a file that usually has the .dll file name extension, although strictly speaking, executable programs with the .exe file name extension are also assemblies.

An assembly can contain many classes. The classes that the .NET Framework class library comprises, such as *System.Console*, are provided in assemblies that are installed on your computer together with Visual Studio. You will find that the .NET Framework class library contains thousands of classes. If they were all held in the same assembly, the assembly would be huge and difficult to maintain. (If Microsoft were to update a single method in a single class, it would have to distribute the entire class library to all developers!)

For this reason, the .NET Framework class library is split into a number of assemblies, partitioned by the functional area to which the classes they contain relate. For example, a “core” assembly (actually called *mscorlib.dll*) contains all the common classes, such as *System.Console*, and further assemblies contain classes for manipulating databases, accessing web services, building GUIs, and so on. If you want to make use of a class in an assembly, you must add to your project a reference to that assembly. You can then add *using* statements to your code that bring the items in namespaces in that assembly into scope.

You should note that there is not necessarily a 1:1 equivalence between an assembly and a namespace: A single assembly can contain classes defined in many namespaces, and a single namespace can span multiple assemblies. For example, the classes and items in the *System* namespace are actually implemented by several assemblies, including *mscorlib.dll*, *System.dll*, and *System.Core.dll*, among others. This all sounds very confusing at first, but you will soon get used to it.

When you use Visual Studio to create an application, the template you select automatically includes references to the appropriate assemblies. For example, in Solution Explorer for the TestHello project, expand the References folder. You will see that a console application automatically contains references to assemblies called *Microsoft.CSharp*, *System*, *System.Core*, *System.Data*, *System.Data.DataExtensions*, *System.Xml*, and *System.Xml.Linq*. You might be surprised to see that *mscorlib.dll* is not included in this list. The reason for this is that all .NET Framework applications must use this assembly because it contains fundamental runtime functionality. The References folder lists only the optional assemblies; you can add or remove assemblies from this folder as necessary.

To add references for additional assemblies to a project, right-click the References folder and then, in the shortcut menu that appears, click Add Reference—you will perform this task in later exercises. You can remove an assembly by right-clicking the assembly in the References folder and then clicking Remove.

## Creating a graphical application

So far, you have used Visual Studio 2013 to create and run a basic console

application. The Visual Studio 2013 programming environment also contains everything you need to create graphical applications for Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1. You can design the user interface (UI) of a Windows application interactively. Visual Studio 2013 then generates the program statements to implement the user interface you've designed.

Visual Studio 2013 provides you with two views of a graphical application: the *design view* and the *code view*. You use the Code and Text Editor window to modify and maintain the code and program logic for a graphical application, and you use the Design View window to lay out your UI. You can switch between the two views whenever you want.

In the following set of exercises, you'll learn how to create a graphical application by using Visual Studio 2013. This program displays a simple form containing a text box where you can enter your name and a button that when clicked displays a personalized greeting.

#### IMPORTANT

In Windows 7 and Windows 8, Visual Studio 2013 provides two templates for building graphical applications: the Windows Forms Application template and the WPF Application template. Windows Forms is a technology that first appeared with the .NET Framework version 1.0. WPF, or Windows Presentation Foundation, is an enhanced technology that first appeared with the .NET Framework version 3.0. It provides many additional features and capabilities over Windows Forms, and you should consider using WPF instead of Windows Forms for all new Windows 7 development.

You can also build Windows Forms and WPF applications in Windows 8.1. However, Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 provide a new flavor of UI, referred to as the “Windows Store” style. Applications that use this style of UI are called Windows Store applications (or *apps*). Windows 8 has been designed to operate on a variety of hardware, including computers with touch-sensitive screens and tablet computers or slates. These computers enable users to interact with applications by using touch-based gestures—for example, users can swipe applications with their fingers to move them around the screen and rotate them, or “pinch” and “stretch” applications to zoom out and back in again. Additionally, many tablets include sensors that can detect the orientation of the device, and Windows 8 can pass this information to an application, which can then dynamically adjust the UI to match the orientation (it can switch from landscape to portrait mode, for example). If you have installed Visual Studio 2013 on a Windows 8.1 computer, you are provided with an additional set of templates for building Windows Store apps. *However, these templates are dependent on features provided by Windows 8.1, so if you are running Windows 8, the Windows Store templates are not available.*

To cater to Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1 developers, I have provided instructions in many of the exercises for using the WPF templates. If you are running Windows 7 or Windows 8 you should follow the Windows 7 instructions. If you want to use the Windows

Store style UI, you should follow the Windows 8.1 instructions. Of course, you can follow the Windows 7 and Windows 8 instructions to use the WPF templates on Windows 8.1 if you prefer.

If you want more information about the specifics of writing Windows 8.1 applications, the final few chapters in **Part IV** of this book provide more detail and guidance.

## Create a graphical application in Visual Studio 2013

- If you are using Windows 8.1, perform the following operations to create a new graphical application:

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project.  
The New Project dialog box opens.
3. In the left pane, in the Installed Templates section, expand the Visual C# folder if it is not already expanded, and then click the Windows Store folder.
4. In the middle pane, click the Blank App (XAML) icon.

### NOTE

XAML stands for Extensible Application Markup Language, which is the language that Windows Store apps use to define the layout for the GUI of an application. You will learn more about XAML as you progress through the exercises in this book.

5. Ensure that the Location field refers to the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 1 folder in your Documents folder.
6. In the Name box, type **Hello**.
7. In the Solution box, ensure that Create New Solution is selected.  
This action creates a new solution for holding the project. The alternative, Add To Solution, adds the project to the TestHello solution, which is not what you want for this exercise.

8. Click OK.

If this is the first time that you have created a Windows Store app, you will be prompted to apply for a developer license. You must agree to the terms and conditions indicated in the dialog box before you can continue to build Windows Store apps. If you concur with these conditions, click I Agree, as depicted in the illustration that follows. You will be prompted to sign into Windows Live (you can create a new account at this point if necessary), and a developer license will be created and allocated to you.



9. After the application has been created, look in the Solution Explorer window.

Don't be fooled by the name of the application template—although it is called Blank App, this template actually provides a number of files and contains some code. For example, if you expand the MainPage.xaml folder, you will find a C# file named MainPage.xaml.cs. This file is where you add the code that runs when the UI defined by the MainPage.xaml file is displayed.

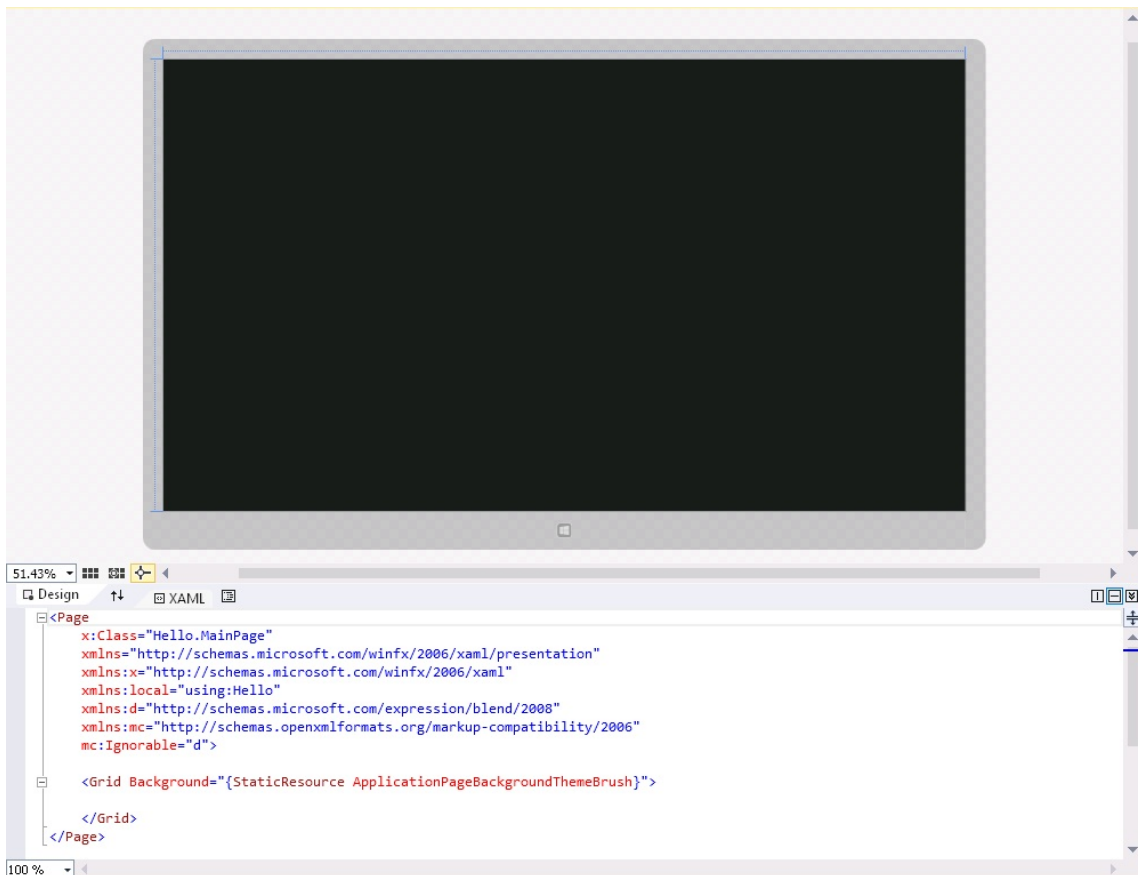
10. In Solution Explorer, double-click MainPage.xaml.

This file contains the layout of the UI. The Design View window shows

This file contains the layout of the UI. The Design view window shows two representations of this file:

At the top is a graphical view depicting the screen of a tablet computer. The lower pane contains a description of the contents of this screen using XAML. XAML is an XML-like language used by Windows Store apps and WPF applications to define the layout of a form and its contents. If you have knowledge of XML, XAML should look familiar.

In the next exercise, you will use the Design View window to lay out the UI for the application, and you will examine the XAML code that this layout generates.

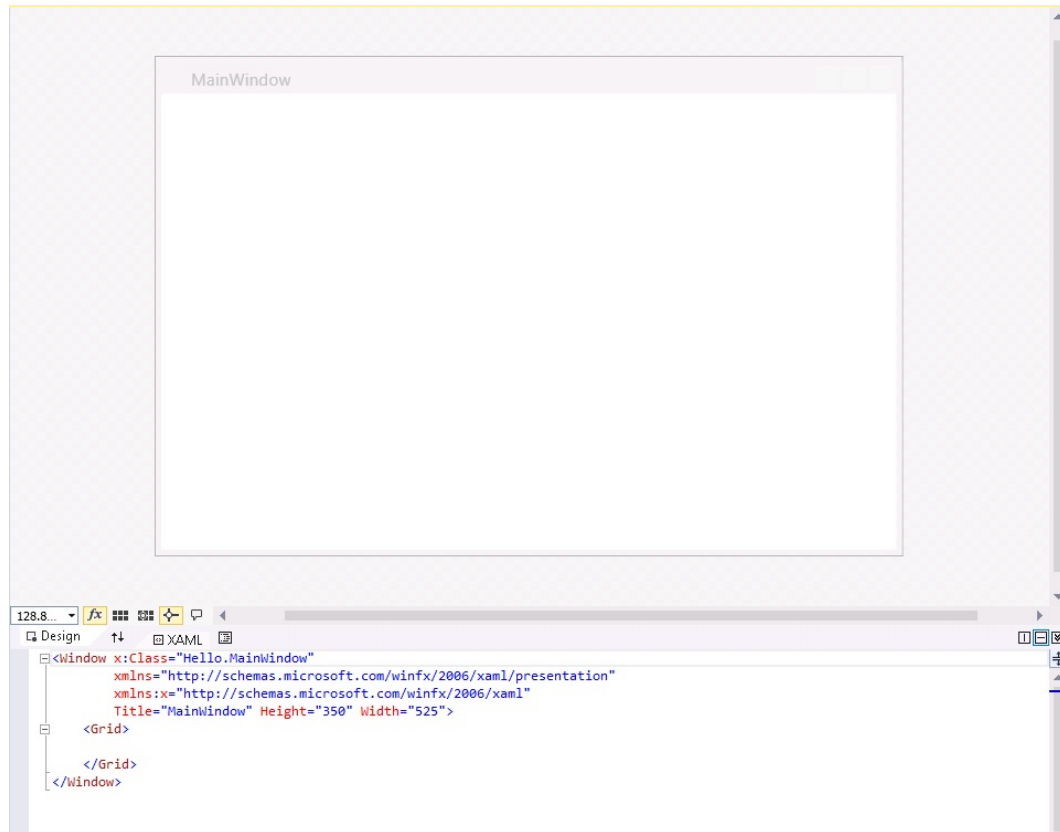


- If you are using Windows 8 or Windows 7, perform the following tasks:
  1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
  2. On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project.  
The New Project dialog box opens.

3. In the left pane, in the Installed Templates section, expand the Visual C# folder if it is not already expanded, and then click the Windows folder.
4. In the middle pane, click the WPF Application icon.
5. Ensure that the Location box refers to the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 1 folder in your Documents folder.
6. In the Name box, type **Hello**.
7. In the Solution box, ensure that Create New Solution is selected, and then click OK.

The WPF Application template generates fewer items than the Windows Store Blank App template; it contains none of the styles generated by the Blank App template because the functionality that these styles embody is specific to Windows 8.1. However, the WPF Application template does generate a default window for your application. Like a Windows Store app, this window is defined by using XAML, but in this case it is called MainWindow.xaml by default.

8. In Solution Explorer, double-click MainWindow.xaml to display the contents of this file in the Design View window.



### TIP

Close the Output and Error List windows to provide more space for displaying the Design View window.

Note Before going further, it is worth explaining some terminology. In a typical WPF application, the UI consists of one or more *windows*, but in a Windows Store app the corresponding items are referred to as *pages* (strictly speaking, a WPF application can also contain pages, but I don't want to confuse matters at this point). To avoid repeating the rather verbose phrase "WPF window or Windows Store app page" repeatedly throughout this book, I will simply refer to both items by using the blanket term *form*. However, I will continue to use the word *window* to refer to items in the Visual Studio 2013 IDE, such as the Design View window.

In the following exercises, you will use the Design View window to add three controls to the form displayed by your application, and you will examine some of the C# code automatically generated by Visual Studio 2013 to implement these controls.

#### NOTE

The steps in the following exercises are common to Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1, except where any differences are explicitly called out.

### Create the UI

1. Click the Toolbox tab that appears to the left of the form in the Design View window.

The Toolbox appears, partially obscuring the form, and displays the various components and controls that you can place on a form.

2. If you are using Windows 8.1, expand the Common XAML Controls section.

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, expand the Common WPF Controls section.

This section displays a list of controls that most graphical applications use.

#### TIP

The All XAML Controls section (Windows 8.1) or All WPF Controls section (Windows 7 and Windows 8) displays a more extensive list of controls.

3. In the Common XAML Controls section or Common WPF Controls section, click *TextBlock*, and then drag the *TextBlock* control onto the form displayed in the Design View window.

#### TIP

Ensure that you select the *TextBlock* control and not the *TextBox* control. If you accidentally place the wrong control on a form, you can easily remove it by clicking the item on the form and then pressing Delete.

A *TextBlock* control is added to the form (you will move it to its correct location in a moment), and the Toolbox disappears from view.



#### TIP

If you want the Toolbox to remain visible but not hide any part of the form, at the right end of the Toolbox title bar, click the Auto Hide button (it looks like a pin). The Toolbox appears permanently on the left side of the Visual Studio 2013 window, and the Design View window shrinks to accommodate it. (You might lose a lot of space if you have a low-resolution screen.) Clicking the Auto Hide button once more causes the Toolbox to disappear again.

4. The *TextBlock* control on the form is probably not exactly where you want it. You can click and drag the controls you have added to a form to reposition them. Using this technique, move the *TextBlock* control so that it is positioned toward the upper-left corner of the form. (The exact placement is not critical for this application.) Notice that you might need to click away from the control and then click it again before you are able to move it in the Design View window.

The XAML description of the form in the lower pane now includes the *TextBlock* control, together with properties such as its location on the form, governed by the *Margin* property, the default text displayed by this control in the *Text* property, the alignment of text displayed by this control specified by the *HorizontalAlignment* and *VerticalAlignment* properties, and whether text should wrap if it exceeds the width of the control.

If you are using Windows 8.1, the XAML code for the *TextBlock* will look similar to this (your values for the *Margin* property might be slightly different, depending on where you have positioned the *TextBlock* control on the form):

```
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="400,200,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="TextBlock" VerticalAlignment="Top"/>
```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, the XAML code will be much the same, except that the units used by the *Margin* property operate on a different scale due to the finer resolution of Windows 8.1 devices.

The XAML pane and the Design View window have a two-way relationship with each other. You can edit the values in the XAML pane, and the changes will be reflected in the Design View window. For

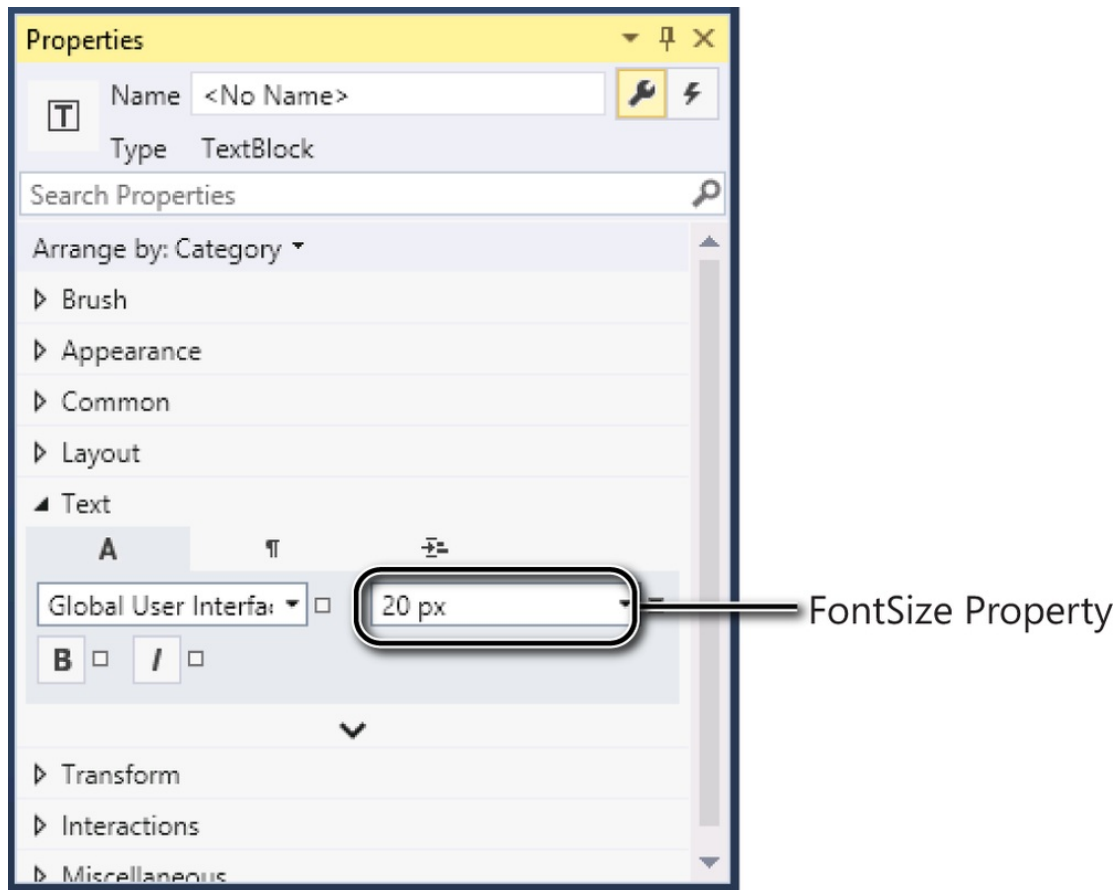
example, you can change the location of the *TextBlock* control by modifying the values in the *Margin* property.

5. On the View menu, click Properties Window.

If it was not already displayed, the Properties window appears at the lower right of the screen, under Solution Explorer. You can specify the properties of controls by using the XAML pane under the Design View window, but the Properties window provides a more convenient way for you to modify the properties for items on a form, as well as other items in a project.

The Properties window is context sensitive in that it displays the properties for the currently selected item. If you click the form displayed in the Design View window, outside of the *TextBlock* control, you can see that the Properties window displays the properties for a *Grid* element. If you look at the XAML pane, you should see that the *TextBlock* control is contained within a *Grid* element. All forms contain a *Grid* element that controls the layout of displayed items; for example, you can define tabular layouts by adding rows and columns to the *Grid*.

6. In the Design View window, click the *TextBlock* control. The Properties window displays the properties for the *TextBlock* control again.
7. In the Properties window, expand the *Text* property. Change the *FontSize* property to **20 px** and then press Enter. This property is located next to the drop-down list box containing the name of the font, which will be different for Windows 8.1 (Global User Interface) and Windows 7 or Windows 8 (Segoe UI):



#### NOTE

The suffix *px* indicates that the font size is measured in pixels.

8. In the XAML pane below the Design View window, examine the text that defines the *TextBlock* control. If you scroll to the end of the line, you should see the text `FontSize="20"`. Any changes that you make using the Properties window are automatically reflected in the XAML definitions, and vice versa.

Type over the value of the *FontSize* property in the XAML pane, changing it to **24**. The font size of the text for the *TextBlock* control in the Design View window and the Properties window changes.

9. In the Properties window, examine the other properties of the *TextBlock* control. Feel free to experiment by changing them to see their effects.

Notice that as you change the values of properties, these properties are added to the definition of the *TextBlock* control in the XAML pane. Each control that you add to a form has a default set of property values, and these values are not displayed in the XAML pane unless you change them.

10. Change the value of the *Text* property of the *TextBlock* control from *TextBlock* to **Please enter your name**. You can do this either by editing the *Text* element in the XAML pane or by changing the value in the Properties window (this property is located in the Common section in the Properties window).

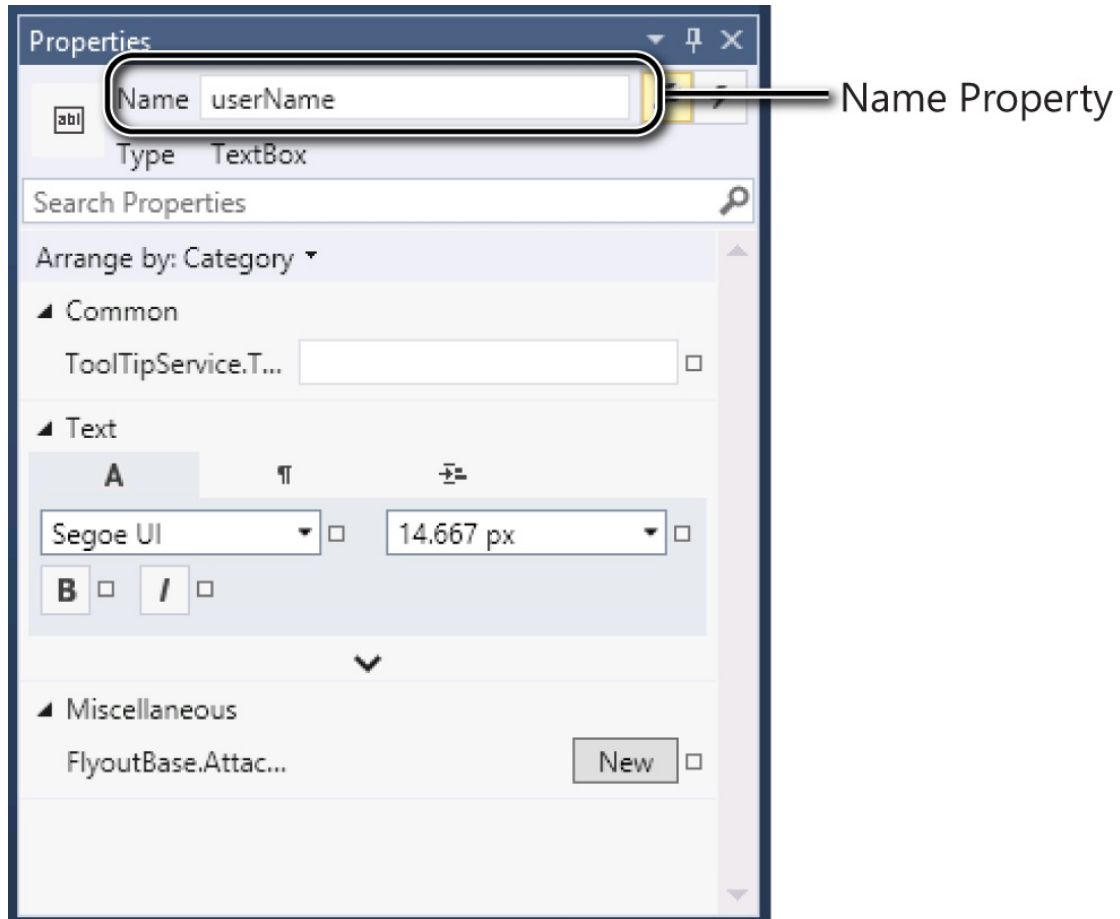
Notice that the text displayed in the *TextBlock* control in the Design View window changes.

11. Click the form in the Design View window and then display the Toolbox again.
12. In the Toolbox, click and drag the *TextBox* control onto the form. Move the *TextBox* control so that it is directly below the *TextBlock* control.

**TIP**

When you drag a control on a form, alignment indicators appear automatically when the control becomes aligned vertically or horizontally with other controls. This gives you a quick visual cue to ensure that controls are lined up neatly.

13. In the Design View window, place the mouse over the right edge of the *TextBox* control. The mouse pointer should change to a double-headed arrow, indicating that you can resize the control. Drag the right edge of the *TextBox* control until it is aligned with the right edge of the *TextBlock* control above; a guide should appear when the two edges are correctly aligned.
14. While the *TextBox* control is selected, at the top of the Properties window, change the value of the *Name* property from <No Name> to **userName**, as illustrated here:



#### NOTE

You will learn more about naming conventions for controls and variables in [Chapter 2](#).

15. Display the Toolbox again and then click and drag a *Button* control onto the form. Place the *Button* control to the right of the *TextBox* control on the form so that the bottom of the button is aligned horizontally with the bottom of the text box.
16. Using the Properties window, change the *Name* property of the *Button* control to **ok** and change the *Content* property (in the Common section) from `Button` to **OK** and press Enter. Verify that the caption of the *Button* control on the form changes to display the text *OK*.
17. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, click the title bar of the form in

the Design View window. In the Properties window, change the *Title* property (in the Common section again) from MainWindow to **Hello**.

**NOTE**

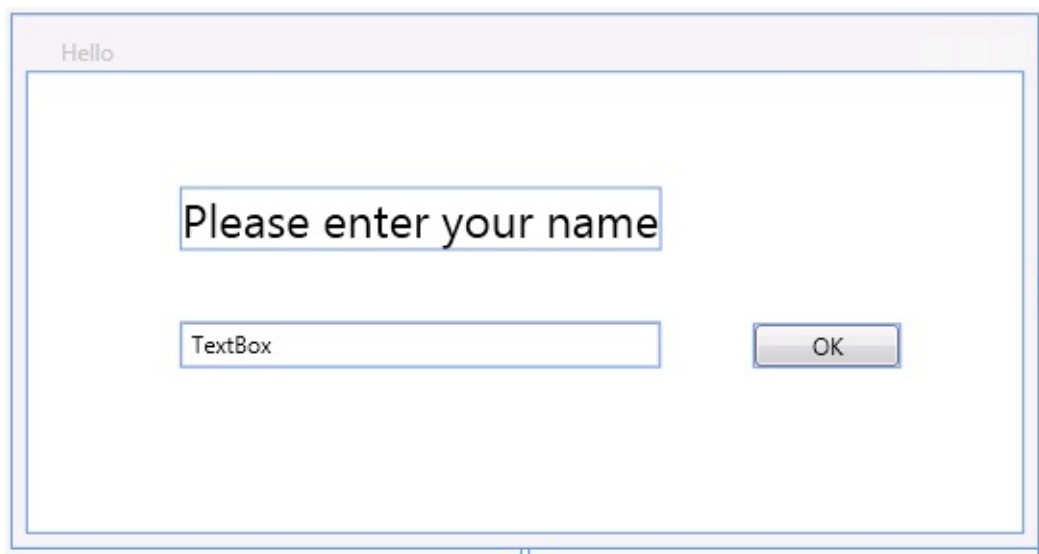
Windows Store apps do not have a title bar.

18. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, in the Design View window, click the title bar of the Hello form. Notice that a resize handle (a small square) appears in the lower-right corner of the Hello form. Move the mouse pointer over the resize handle. When the pointer changes to a diagonal double-headed arrow, drag the pointer to resize the form. Stop dragging and release the mouse button when the spacing around the controls is roughly equal.

**IMPORTANT**

Click the title bar of the Hello form and not the outline of the grid inside the Hello form before resizing it. If you select the grid, you will modify the layout of the controls on the form but not the size of the form itself.

The Hello form should now look similar to the following figure:

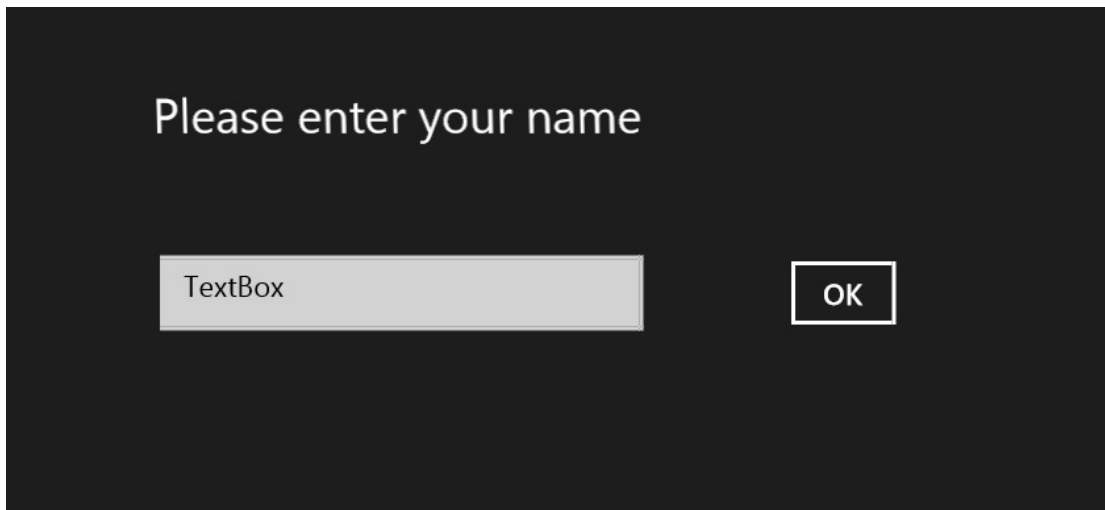


#### NOTE

Pages in Windows Store apps cannot be resized in the same way as WPF forms; when they run, they automatically occupy the full screen of the device. However, they can adapt themselves to different screen resolutions and device orientation, and present different views when they are “snapped.” You can easily see what your application looks like on a different device by clicking Device Window on the Design menu and then selecting from the different screen resolutions available in the Display drop-down list. You can also see how your application appears in portrait mode or when snapped by selecting the Portrait orientation or Snapped view from the list of available views.

19. On the Build menu, click Build Solution, and then verify that the project builds successfully.
20. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

The application should run and display your form. If you are using Windows 8.1, the form occupies the entire screen and looks like this:



#### NOTE

When you run a Windows Store App in Debug mode in Windows 8.1, two pairs of numbers appear in the upper-left and upper-right corner of the screen. These numbers track the frame rate, and developers can use them to determine when an application starts to become less responsive than it should be (possibly an indication of performance issues). They appear only when an application runs in Debug mode. A full description of what these numbers mean is beyond the scope of this book, so you can ignore them for now.

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, the form looks like this:



In the text box, you can type over what is there, type your name, and then click OK, but nothing happens yet. You need to add some code to indicate what should happen when the user clicks the OK button, which is what you will do next.

21. Return to Visual Studio 2013. On the DEBUG menu, click Stop Debugging.
  - If you are using Windows 8.1, press the Windows key + B. This should return you to the Windows Desktop running Visual Studio, from which you can access the Debug menu.
  - If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, you can switch directly to Visual Studio. You can also click the close button (the X in the upper-right corner of the form) to close the form, stop debugging, and return to Visual Studio.

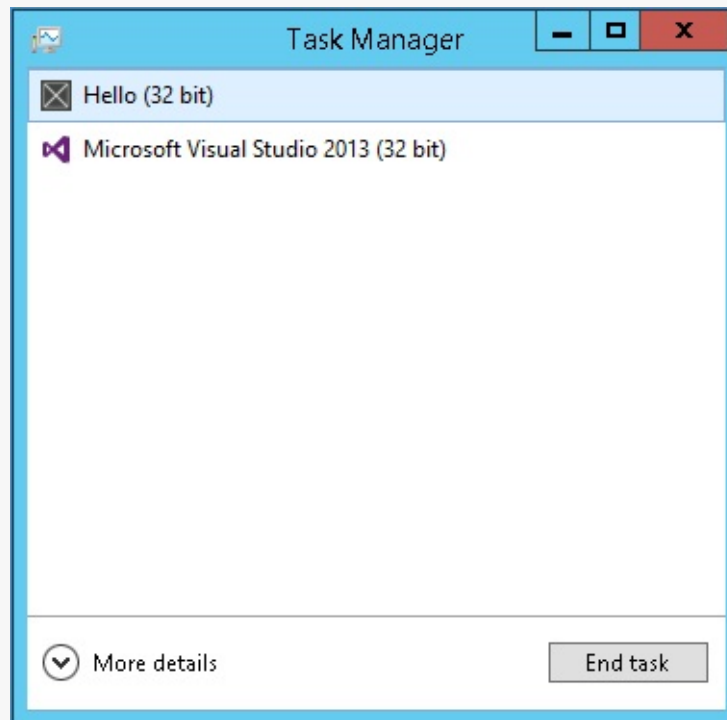
### **CLOSING A WINDOWS STORE APP**

If you are using Windows 8.1 and you clicked Start Without Debugging on the Debug menu to run the application, you will need to forcibly close it. This is because unlike console applications, the lifetime of a Windows Store app is managed by the operating system rather than the user. Windows 8.1 suspends an application when it is not currently displayed, and it will terminate the application when the operating system needs to free the resources consumed by that application. The most reliable way to forcibly stop the Hello application is to click (or place your finger if you have a touch-sensitive screen) at the top of the screen and then click and drag (or swipe) the application to the bottom of the screen and hold it until the image of the application flips around (if you release the application before



screen and hold it until the image of the application flips around (if you release the application before the image flips, the application will continue to run in the background). This action closes the application and returns you to the Windows Start screen where you can switch back to Visual Studio. Alternatively, you can perform the following tasks:

1. Click, or place your finger, in the upper-right corner of the screen and then drag the image of Visual Studio to the middle of the screen (or press Windows key + B)
2. At the bottom of the desktop, right-click the Windows taskbar, and then click Task Manager.
3. In the Task Manager window, click the Hello application, and then click End Task.



4. Close the Task Manager window.

You have managed to create a graphical application without writing a single line of C# code. It does not do much yet (you will have to write some code soon), but Visual Studio 2013 actually generates a lot of code for you that handles routine tasks that all graphical applications must perform, such as starting up and displaying a window. Before adding your own code to the application, it helps to have an understanding of what Visual Studio has produced for you. The structure is slightly different between a Windows Store app and a WPF application, and the following sections summarize these application styles separately.

## Examining the Windows Store app

If you are using Windows 8.1, in Solution Explorer, click the arrow adjacent to the MainPage.xaml file to expand the node. The file MainPage.xaml.cs appears; double-click this file. The following code for the form is displayed in the Code and Text Editor window:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.IO;
using System.Linq;
using Windows.Foundation;
using Windows.Foundation.Collections;
using Windows.UI.Xaml;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls.Primitives;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Data;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Input;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Media;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Navigation;
// The Blank Page item template is documented at http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?
LinkId=234238
namespace Hello
{
    /// <summary>
    /// An empty page that can be used on its own or navigated to within a Frame.
    /// </summary>
    public sealed partial class MainPage : Page
    {
        public MainPage()
        {
            this.InitializeComponent();
        }
    }
}
```

In addition to a good number of *using* directives bringing into scope some namespaces that most Windows Store apps use, the file contains the definition of a class called *MainPage* but not much else. There is a little bit of code for the *MainPage* class known as a *constructor* that calls a method called *InitializeComponent*. A constructor is a special method with the same name as the class. It runs when an instance of the class is created and can contain code to initialize the instance. You will learn about constructors in [Chapter 7](#).

The class actually contains a lot more code than the few lines shown in the `MainPage.xaml.cs` file, but much of it is generated automatically based on the XAML description of the form, and it is hidden from you. This hidden code performs operations such as creating and displaying the form, and creating and positioning the various controls on the form.

**TIP**

You can also display the C# code file for a page in a Windows Store app by clicking **Code** on the **View** menu when the Design View window is displayed.

At this point, you might be wondering where the *Main* method is and how the form gets displayed when the application runs. Remember that in a console application *Main* defines the point at which the program starts. A graphical application is slightly different.

In Solution Explorer, you should notice another source file called `App.xaml`. If you expand the node for this file, you will see another file called `App.xaml.cs`. In a Windows Store app, the `App.xaml` file provides the entry point at which the application starts running. If you double-click `App.xaml.cs` in Solution Explorer, you should see some code that looks similar to this:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.IO;
using System.Linq;
using Windows.ApplicationModel;
using Windows.ApplicationModel.Activation;
using Windows.Foundation;
using Windows.Foundation.Collections;
using Windows.UI.Xaml;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls.Primitives;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Data;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Input;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Media;
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Navigation;
// The Blank Application template is documented at http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?
LinkId=234227
namespace Hello
```

```

{
    /// <summary>
    /// Provides application-specific behavior to supplement the default Application
class.
    /// </summary>
    sealed partial class App : Application
    {
        /// <summary>
        /// Initializes the singleton application object. This is the first line of
authored
code
        /// executed, and as such is the logical equivalent of main() or WinMain().
        /// </summary>
        public App()
        {
            this.InitializeComponent();
            this.Suspending += OnSuspending;
        }
        /// <summary>
        /// Invoked when the application is launched normally by the end user.
Other entry
points
        /// will be used when the application is launched to open a specific file,
to display
        /// search results, and so forth.
        /// </summary>
        /// <param name="args">Details about the launch request and process.</param>
        protected override void OnLaunched(LaunchActivatedEventArgs e)
        {
            #if DEBUG
                if (System.Diagnostics.Debugger.IsAttached)
                {
                    this.DebugSettings.EnableFrameRateCounter = true;
                }
            #endif

            Frame rootFrame = Window.Current.Content as Frame;
            // Do not repeat app initialization when the Window already has content,
            // just ensure that the window is active
            if (rootFrame == null)
            {
                // Create a Frame to act as the navigation context and navigate to
the first
page
                rootFrame = new Frame();
                if (e.PreviousExecutionState ==
ApplicationExecutionState.Terminated)
                {

```

```

        //TODO: Load state from previously suspended application
    }
    // Place the frame in the current Window
    Window.Current.Content = rootFrame;
}
if (rootFrame.Content == null)
{
    // When the navigation stack isn't restored navigate to the first
page,
    // configuring the new page by passing required information as a
navigation
    // parameter
    if (!rootFrame.Navigate(typeof(GraphWindow), e.Arguments))
    {
        throw new Exception("Failed to create initial page");
    }
}
// Ensure the current window is active
Window.Current.Activate();
}
/// <summary>
/// Invoked when application execution is being suspended. Application
state is saved
/// without knowing whether the application will be terminated or resumed
with the
contents
/// of memory still intact.
/// </summary>
/// <param name="sender">The source of the suspend request.</param>
/// <param name="e">Details about the suspend request.</param>
private void OnSuspending(object sender, SuspendingEventArgs e)
{
    var deferral = e.SuspendingOperation.GetDeferral();
    //TODO: Save application state and stop any background activity
    deferral.Complete();
}
}
}

```

Much of this code consists of comments (the lines beginning “///”) and other statements that you don’t need to understand just yet, but the key elements are located in the *OnLaunched* method, highlighted in bold. This method runs when the application starts, and the code in this method causes the application to create a new *Frame* object, display the MainPage form in this frame, and then activate it. It is not necessary at this stage to fully comprehend how this code works or

the syntax of any of these statements, but it's helpful that you simply appreciate that this is how the application displays the form when it starts running.

## Examining the WPF application

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, in Solution Explorer, click the arrow adjacent to the MainWindow.xaml file to expand the node. The file MainWindow.xaml.cs appears; double-click this file. The code for the form displays in the Code and Text Editor window, as shown here:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.Linq;
using System.Text;
using System.Windows;
using System.Windows.Controls;
using System.Windows.Data;
using System.Windows.Documents;
using System.Windows.Input;
using System.Windows.Media;
using System.Windows.Media.Imaging;
using System.Windows.Navigation;
using System.Windows.Shapes;
namespace Hello
{
    /// <summary>
    /// Interaction logic for MainWindow.xaml
    /// </summary>
    public partial class MainWindow : Window
    {
        public MainWindow()
        {
            InitializeComponent();
        }
    }
}
```

This code looks similar to that for the Windows Store app, but there are some significant differences; many of the namespaces referenced by the *using* directives at the top of the file are different. For example, WPF applications make use of objects defined in namespaces that begin with the prefix *System.Windows*, whereas Windows Store apps use objects defined in

namespaces that start with *Windows.UI*. This difference is not just cosmetic. These namespaces are implemented by different assemblies, and the controls and functionality that these assemblies provide are different between WPF and Windows Store apps, although they might have similar names. Going back to the earlier exercise, you added *TextBlock*, *TextBox*, and *Button* controls to the WPF form and the Windows Store app. Although these controls have the same name in each style of application, they are defined in different assemblies:

*Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls* for Windows Store apps, and *System.Windows.Controls* for WPF applications. The controls for Windows Store apps have been specifically designed and optimized for touch interfaces, whereas the WPF controls are intended primarily for use in mouse-driven systems.

As with the code in the Windows Store app, the constructor in the *MainWindow* class initializes the WPF form by calling the *InitializeComponent* method. Again, as before, the code for this method is hidden from you, and it performs operations such as creating and displaying the form, and creating and positioning the various controls on the form.

The way in which a WPF application specifies the initial form to be displayed is different from that of a Windows Store app. Like a Windows Store app, it defines an *App* object defined in the *App.xaml* file to provide the entry point for the application, but the form to display is specified declaratively as part of the XAML code rather than programmatically. If you double-click the *App.xaml* file in Solution Explorer (not *App.xaml.cs*), you can examine the XAML description. One property in the XAML code is called *StartupUri*, and it refers to the *MainWindow.xaml* file, as shown in bold in the following code example:

```
<Application x:Class="Hello.App"
    xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"
    xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml"
    StartupUri="MainWindow.xaml">
    <Application.Resources>
    </Application.Resources>
</Application>
```

In a WPF application, the *StartupUri* property of the *App* object indicates which form to display.

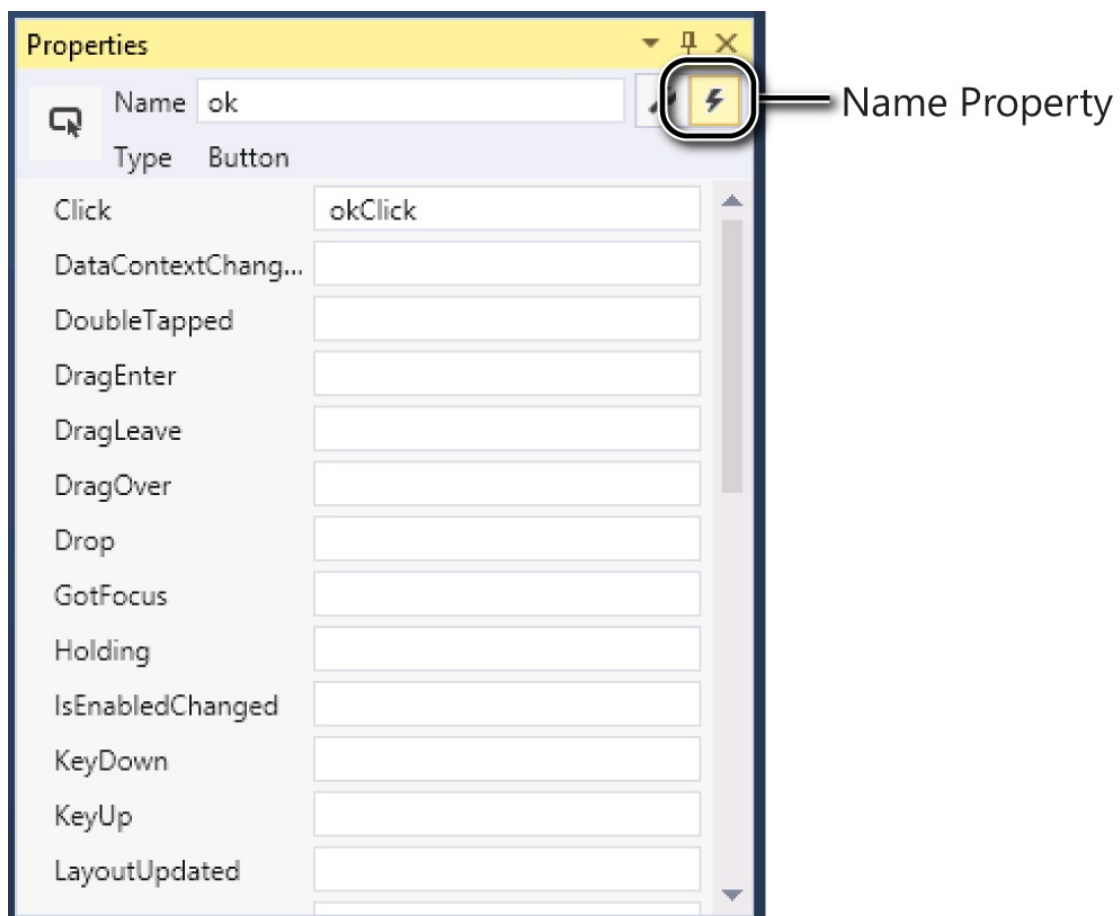
## Adding code to the graphical application

Now that you know a little bit about the structure of a graphical application, the time has come to write some code to make your application actually do something.

Write the code for the OK button

1. In the Design View window, open the MainPage.xaml file (Windows 8.1) or MainWindow.xaml file (Windows 7 or Windows 8) (double-click MainPage.xaml or MainWindow.xaml in Solution Explorer).
2. Still in the Design View window, click the OK button on the form to select it.
3. In the Properties window, click the Event Handlers for the Selected Element button.

This button displays an icon that looks like a bolt of lightning, as demonstrated here:





The Properties window displays a list of event names for the *Button* control. An event indicates a significant action that usually requires a response, and you can write your own code to perform this response.

4. In the box adjacent to the *Click* event, type **okClick**, and then press Enter. The MainPage.xaml.cs file (Windows 8.1) or MainWindow.xaml.cs file (Windows 7 or Windows 8) appears in the Code and Text Editor window, and a new method called *okClick* is added to the *MainPage* or *MainWindow* class. The method looks like this:

```
private void okClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
}
```

Do not worry too much about the syntax of this code just yet—you will learn all about methods in [Chapter 3](#).

5. If you are using Windows 8.1, perform the following tasks:
  - a. Add the following *using* directive shown in bold to the list at the top of the file (the ellipsis character [...] indicates statements that have been omitted for brevity):

```
using System;
...
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Navigation;
using Windows.UI.Popups;
```

- b. Add the following code shown in bold to the *okClick* method:

```
void okClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    MessageDialog msg = new MessageDialog("Hello " + userName.Text);
    msg.ShowAsync();
}
```

This code will run when the user clicks the OK button. Again, do not worry too much about the syntax, just ensure that you copy it exactly as shown; you will find out what these statements mean in the next few

chapters. The key things to understand are that the first statement creates a *MessageDialog* object with the message “Hello <YourName>”, where <YourName> is the name that you type into the *TextBox* on the form. The second statement displays the *MessageDialog*, causing it to appear on the screen. The *MessageDialog* class is defined in the *Windows.UI.Popups* namespace, which is why you added it in step a.

6. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, just add the following single statement shown in bold to the *okClick* method:

```
void okClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    MessageBox.Show("Hello " + userName.Text);
}
```

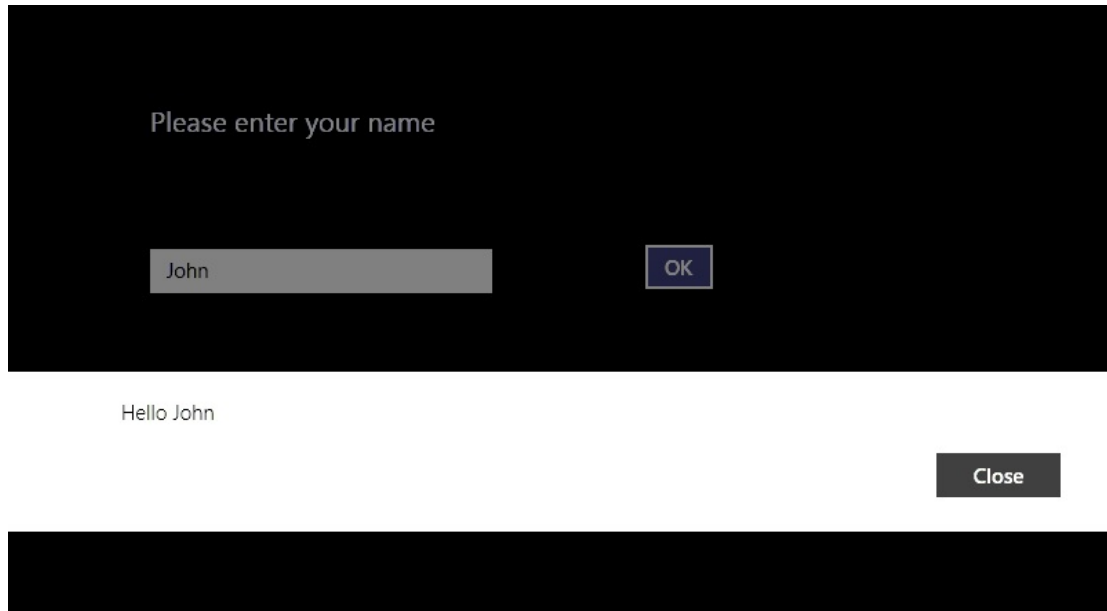
This code performs a similar function to that of the Windows Store app, except that it uses a different class called *MessageBox*. This class is defined in the *System.Windows* namespace, which is already referenced by the existing *using* directives at the top of the file, so you don’t need to add it yourself.

7. Click the *MainPage.xaml* tab or the *MainWindow.xaml* tab above the Code and Text Editor window to display the form in the Design View window again.
8. In the lower pane displaying the XAML description of the form, examine the *Button* element, but be careful not to change anything. Notice that it now contains an element called *Click* that refers to the *okClick* method.

```
<Button x:Name="ok" ... Click="okClick" />
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
10. When the form appears, in the text box type your name over the existing text, and then click OK.

If you are using Windows 8.1, a message dialog appears across the middle of the screen, welcoming you by name.



If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, a message box appears displaying the following greeting:



11. Click Close in the message dialog (Windows 8.1) or OK (Windows 7 or Windows 8) in the message box.
12. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and then, on the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to use Visual Studio 2013 to create, build, and run applications. You created a console application that displays its output in a console window, and you created a WPF application with a simple GUI.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 2**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes to save the project.

## Quick Reference

To	Do this
Create a new console application using Visual Studio 2013	On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project to open the New Project dialog box. In the left pane, under Installed Templates, click Visual C#. In the middle pane, click Console Application. In the Location box, specify a directory for the project files. Type a name for the project and then click OK.
Create a new Windows Store blank graphical application for Windows 8.1 using Visual Studio 2013	On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project to open the New Project dialog box. In the left pane, in the Installed Templates section, expand Visual C#, and then click Windows Store. In the middle pane, click Blank App (XAML). In the Location box, specify a directory for the project files. Type a name for the project and then click OK.
Create a new WPF graphical application for Windows 7 or Windows 8 using Visual Studio 2013	On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project to open the New Project dialog box. In the left pane, in the Installed Templates section, expand Visual C#, and then click Windows. In the middle pane, click WPF Application. Specify a directory for the project files in the Location box. Type a name for the project and then click OK.
Build the application	On the Build menu, click Build Solution.
Run the application in Debug mode	On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
Run the application without debugging	On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

# Chapter 2. Working with variables, operators, and expressions

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understanding statements
- Using variables
- Working with primitive data types
- Using arithmetic operators
- Increment and decrement variables.

**Chapter 1** presents how to use the Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 programming environment to build and run a console program and a graphical application. This chapter introduces you to the elements of Microsoft Visual C# syntax and semantics, including statements, keywords, and identifiers. You'll study the primitive types that are built in to the C# language and the characteristics of the values that each type holds. You'll also see how to declare and use local variables (variables that exist only in a method or other small section of code), learn about the arithmetic operators that C# provides, find out how to use operators to manipulate values, and learn how to control expressions containing two or more operators.

## Understanding statements

A *statement* is a command that performs an action, such as calculating a value and storing the result, or displaying a message to a user. You combine

statements to create methods. You'll learn more about methods in [Chapter 3](#) but for now, think of a method as a named sequence of statements. *Main*, which was introduced in the previous chapter, is an example of a method.

Statements in C# follow a well-defined set of rules describing their format and construction. These rules are collectively known as *syntax*. (In contrast, the specification of what statements *do* is collectively known as *semantics*.) One of the simplest and most important C# syntax rules states that you must terminate all statements with a semicolon. For example, [Chapter 1](#) demonstrates that without the terminating semicolon, the following statement won't compile:

```
Console.WriteLine("Hello, World!");
```

#### TIP

C# is a “free format” language, which means that white space, such as a space character or a new line, is not significant except as a separator. In other words, you are free to lay out your statements in any style you choose. However, you should adopt a simple, consistent layout style to make your programs easier to read and understand.

The trick to programming well in any language is learning the syntax and semantics of the language and then using the language in a natural and idiomatic way. This approach makes your programs more easily maintained. As you progress through this book, you'll see examples of the most important C# statements.

## Using identifiers

*Identifiers* are the names that you use to identify the elements in your programs, such as namespaces, classes, methods, and variables. (You will learn about variables shortly.) In C#, you must adhere to the following syntax rules when choosing identifiers:

- You can use only letters (uppercase and lowercase), digits, and underscore characters.
- An identifier must start with a letter or an underscore.

For example, *result*, *\_score*, *footballTeam*, and *plan9* are all valid identifiers, whereas *result%*, *footballTeam\$*, and *9plan* are not.

#### IMPORTANT

C# is a case-sensitive language: *footballTeam* and *FootballTeam* are two different identifiers.

## Identifying keywords

The C# language reserves 77 identifiers for its own use, and you cannot reuse these identifiers for your own purposes. These identifiers are called *keywords*, and each has a particular meaning. Examples of keywords are *class*, *namespace*, and *using*. You'll learn the meaning of most of the C# keywords as you proceed through this book. The following is the list of keywords:

abstract	do	in	protected	true
as	double	int	public	try
base	else	interface	readonly	typeof
bool	enum	internal	ref	uint
break	event	is	return	ulong
byte	explicit	lock	sbyte	unchecked
case	extern	long	sealed	unsafe
catch	false	namespace	short	ushort
char	finally	new	sizeof	using
checked	fixed	null	stackalloc	virtual
class	float	object	static	void
const	for	operator	string	volatile
continue	foreach	out	struct	while
decimal	goto	override	switch	
default	if	params	this	

delegate	implicit	private	throw	
----------	----------	---------	-------	--

C# also uses the identifiers that follow. These identifiers are not reserved by C#, which means that you can use these names as identifiers for your own methods, variables, and classes, but you should avoid doing so if at all possible.

add	get	remove
alias	global	select
ascending	group	set
async	into	value
await	join	var
descending	let	where
dynamic	orderby	yield
from	partial	

## Using variables

A *variable* is a storage location that holds a value. You can think of a variable as a box in the computer's memory that holds temporary information. You must give each variable in a program an unambiguous name that uniquely identifies it in the context in which it is used. You use a variable's name to refer to the value it holds. For example, if you want to store the value of the cost of an item in a store, you might create a variable simply called *cost* and store the item's cost in this variable. Later on, if you refer to the *cost* variable, the value retrieved will be the item's cost that you stored there earlier.

## Naming variables

You should adopt a naming convention for variables that helps you to avoid confusion concerning the variables you have defined. This is especially important if you are part of a project team with several developers working on different parts of an application; a consistent naming convention helps to avoid confusion and can reduce the scope for bugs. The following list contains some



general recommendations:

- Don't start an identifier with an underscore. Although this is legal in C#, it can limit the interoperability of your code with applications built by using other languages, such as Microsoft Visual Basic.
- Don't create identifiers that differ only by case. For example, do not create one variable named *myVariable* and another named *MyVariable* for use at the same time, because it is too easy to get them confused. Also, defining identifiers that differ only by case can limit the ability to reuse classes in applications developed by using other languages that are not case sensitive, such as Visual Basic.
- Start the name with a lowercase letter.
- In a multiword identifier, start the second and each subsequent word with an uppercase letter. (This is called *camelCase notation*.)
- Don't use Hungarian notation. (If you are a Microsoft Visual C++ developer, you are probably familiar with Hungarian notation. If you don't know what Hungarian notation is, don't worry about it!)

For example, *score*, *footballTeam*, *\_score*, and *FootballTeam* are all valid variable names, but only the first two are recommended.

## Declaring variables

Variables hold values. C# has many different types of values that it can store and process—integers, floating-point numbers, and strings of characters, to name three. When you declare a variable, you must specify the type of data it will hold.

You declare the type and name of a variable in a declaration statement. For example, the statement that follows declares that the variable named *age* holds *int* (integer) values. As always, you must terminate the statement with a semicolon.

```
int age;
```

The variable type *int* is the name of one of the *primitive C# types*, *integer*, which is a whole number. (You'll learn about several primitive data types later in this chapter.)

#### NOTE

If you are a Visual Basic programmer, you should note that C# does not allow implicit variable declarations. You must explicitly declare all variables before you use them.

After you've declared your variable, you can assign it a value. The statement that follows assigns *age* the value 42. Again, note that the semicolon is required.

```
age = 42;
```

The equal sign (=) is the *assignment* operator, which assigns the value on its right to the variable on its left. After this assignment, you can use the *age* variable in your code to refer to the value it holds. The next statement writes the value of the *age* variable (42) to the console:

```
Console.WriteLine(age);
```

#### TIP

If you leave the mouse pointer over a variable in the Visual Studio 2013 Code and Text Editor window, a ScreenTip appears, indicating the type of the variable.

## Working with primitive data types

C# has a number of built-in types called *primitive data types*. The following table lists the most commonly used primitive data types in C# and the range of values that you can store in each.

Data type	Description	Size (bits)	Range	Sample usage
int	Whole numbers (integers)	32	$-2^{31}$ through $2^{31} - 1$	int count; count = 42;

long	Whole numbers (bigger range)	64	$-2^{63}$ through $2^{63} - 1$	long wait; wait = 42L;
float	Floating-point numbers	32	$\pm 1.5 \times 10^{-45}$ through $\pm 3.4 \times 10^{38}$	float away; away = 0.42F;
double	Double-precision (more accurate) floating-point numbers	64	$\pm 5.0 \times 10^{-324}$ through $\pm 1.7 \times 10^{308}$	double trouble; trouble = 0.42;
decimal	Monetary values	128	28 significant figures	decimal coin; coin = 0.42M;
string	Sequence of characters	16 bits per character	Not applicable	string vest; vest = “forty two”;
char	Single character	16	0 through $2^{16} - 1$	char grill; grill = ‘x’;
bool	Boolean	8	True or false	bool teeth; teeth = false;

## Unassigned local variables

When you declare a variable, it contains a random value until you assign a value to it. This behavior was a rich source of bugs in C and C++ programs that created a variable and accidentally used it as a source of information before giving it a value. C# does not allow you to use an unassigned variable. You must assign a value to a variable before you can use it; otherwise, your program will not compile. This requirement is called the *definite assignment rule*. For example, the following statements generate the compile-time error message “Use of unassigned local variable ‘age’” because the *Console.WriteLine* statement attempts to display the value of an uninitialized variable:

```
int age;  
Console.WriteLine(age); // compile-time error
```

## Displaying primitive data type values

In the following exercise, you use a C# program named `PrimitiveDataTypes` to demonstrate how several primitive data types work.

Display primitive data type values

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. On the File menu, point to Open, and then click Project/Solution.  
The Open Project dialog box appears.
3. If you are using Windows 8.1, move to the `\Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 2\Windows 8.1\PrimitiveDataTypes` folder in your Documents folder. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, move to the `\Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 2\Windows 7\PrimitiveDataTypes` folder in your Documents folder.

### NOTE

To avoid repetition and to save space, in subsequent exercises I will refer to solution paths by using simply a phrase of the form `\Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 2\Windows X\PrimitiveDataTypes`, where *X* is either 7 or 8.1, depending on the operating system you are using.

### IMPORTANT

Remember, if you are running Windows 8, use the Windows 7 projects and solutions in all of the exercises in this book.

4. Select the `PrimitiveDataTypes` solution file, and then click Open.

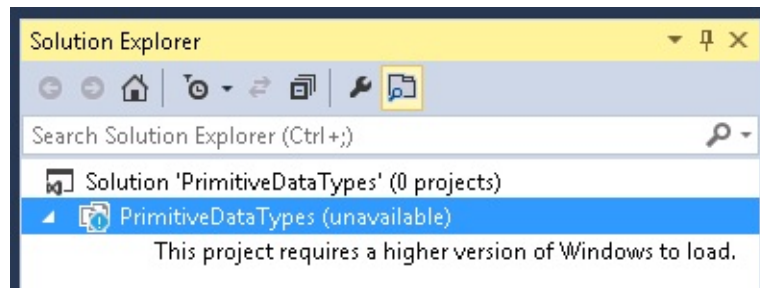
The solution loads, and Solution Explorer displays the `PrimitiveDataTypes` project.

### NOTE

Solution file names have the .sln suffix, such as PrimitiveDataTypes.sln. A solution can contain one or more projects. Project files have the .csproj suffix. If you open a project rather than a solution, Visual Studio 2013 automatically creates a new solution file for it. This situation can be confusing if you are not aware of this feature because it can result in you accidentally generating multiple solutions for the same project.

#### TIP

Be sure to open the solution file in the correct folder for your operating system. If you attempt to open a solution for a Windows Store app by using Visual Studio 2013 on Windows 7 or Windows 8, the project will fail to load. Solution Explorer will mark the project as unavailable and display the message “This project requires a higher version of Windows to load” if you expand the project node, as shown in the following image:



If this happens, close the solution and open the version in the correct folder.

#### 5. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

You might see some warnings in Visual Studio. You can safely ignore them. (You will correct them in the next exercise.)

If you are using Windows 8.1, the following page is displayed:

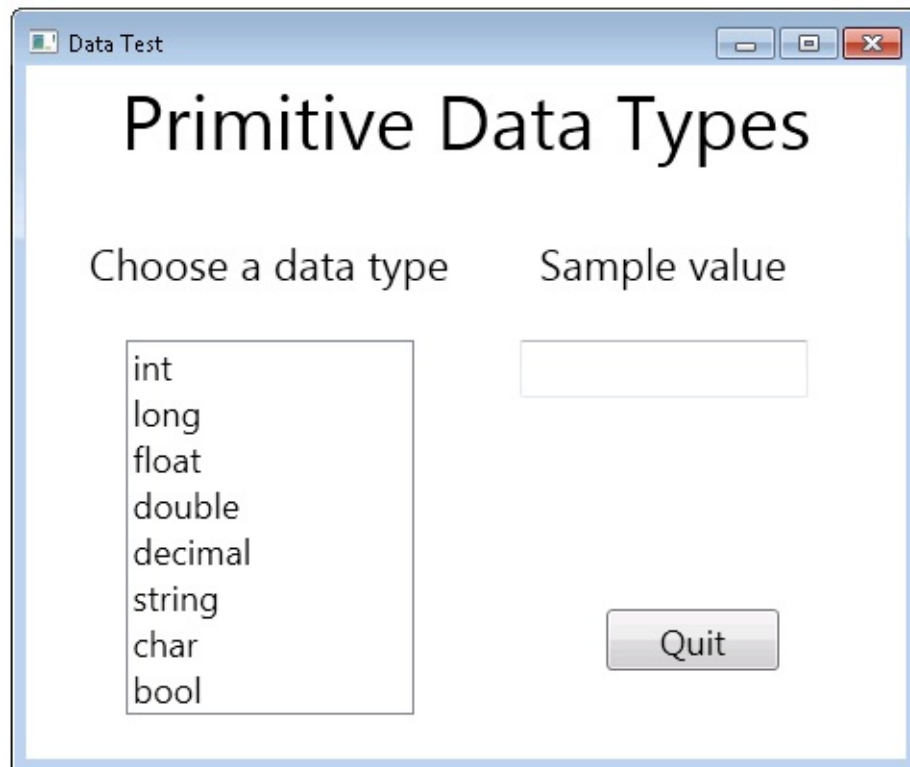
## Primitive Data Types

Choose a data type

int  
long  
float  
double  
decimal  
string  
char  
bool

Sample value

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, the following window appears:



6. In the Choose A Data Type list, click *string*.

The value “forty two” appears in the Sample Value box.

7. Again, in the Choose A Data Type list, click the *int* type.  
The value “to do” appears in the Sample Value box, indicating that the statements to display an *int* value still need to be written.
8. Click each data type in the list. Confirm that the code for the *double* and *bool* types is not yet implemented.
9. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and then, on the DEBUG menu, click Stop Debugging.

#### NOTE

Remember that in Windows 8.1, you can press Windows key+B to return to the Windows Desktop displaying Visual Studio 2013.

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, you can also click Quit to close the window and stop the program.

### Use primitive data types in code

1. In Solution Explorer, expand the PrimitiveDataTypes project (if it is not already expanded), and then double-click MainWindow.xaml.

#### NOTE

To keep the exercise instructions simple, the forms in the Windows 8.1 and Windows 7 versions of the code have the same names.

The form for the application appears in the Design View window.

#### HINT

If your screen is not big enough to display the entire form, you can zoom in and out in the Design View window by using Ctrl+Alt+= and Ctrl+Alt+- or by selecting the size from the zoom drop-down list in the lower-left corner of the Design View window.

2. In the XAML pane, scroll down to locate the markup for the *ListBox*

control. This control displays the list of data types in the left part of the form, and it looks like this (some of the properties have been removed from this text):

```
<ListBox x:Name="type" ... SelectionChanged="typeSelectionChanged">
  <ListBoxItem>int</ListBoxItem>
  <ListBoxItem>long</ListBoxItem>
  <ListBoxItem>float</ListBoxItem>
  <ListBoxItem>double</ListBoxItem>
  <ListBoxItem>decimal</ListBoxItem>
  <ListBoxItem>string</ListBoxItem>
  <ListBoxItem>char</ListBoxItem>
  <ListBoxItem>bool</ListBoxItem>
</ListBox>
```

The *ListBox* control displays each data type as a separate *ListBoxItem*. When the application is running, if a user clicks an item in the list, the *SelectionChanged* event occurs (this is a little bit like the *Clicked* event that occurs when the user clicks a button, which is demonstrated in [Chapter 1](#)). You can see that in this case, the *ListBox* invokes the *typeSelectionChanged* method. This method is defined in the *MainWindow.xaml.cs* file.

3. On the View menu, click Code.

The Code and Text Editor window opens, displaying the *MainWindow.xaml.cs* file.

**NOTE**

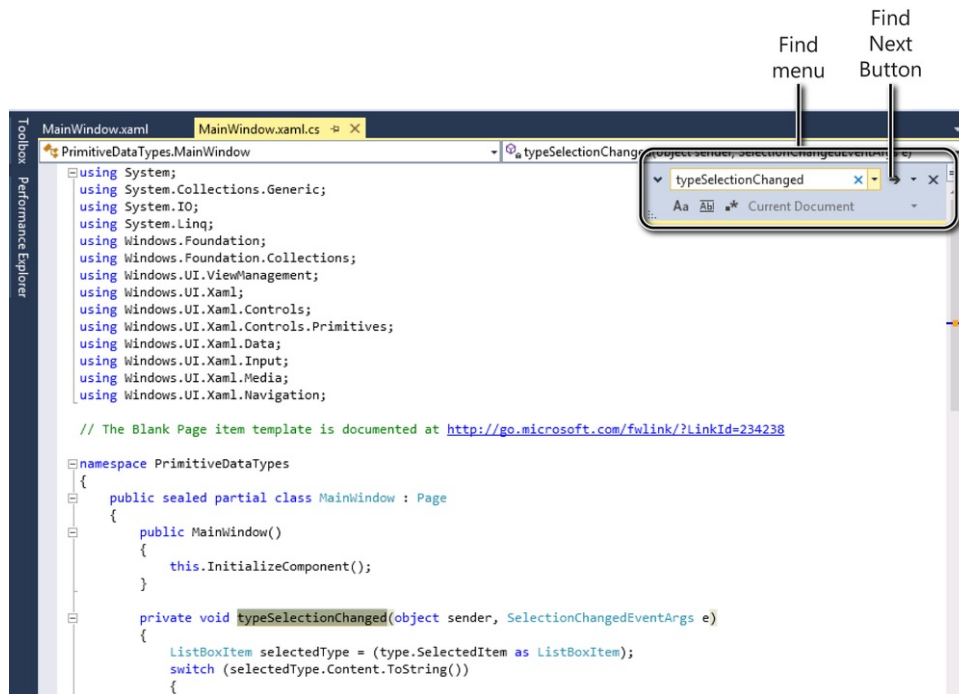
Remember that you can also use Solution Explorer to access the code. Click the arrow to the left of the *MainWindow.xaml* file to expand the node, and then double-click *MainWindow.xaml.cs*.

4. In the Code and Text Editor window, find the *typeSelectionChanged* method.

**TIP**



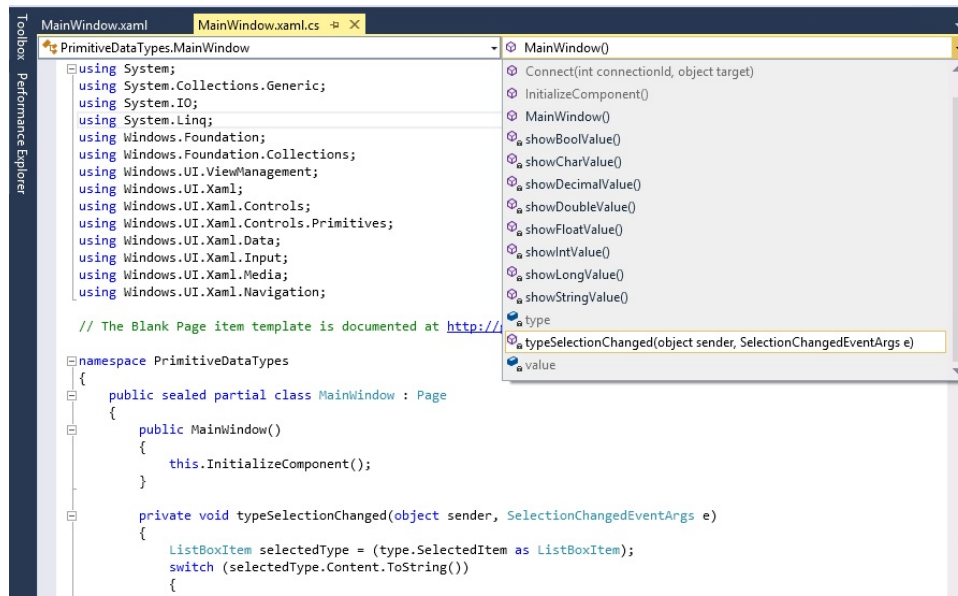
To locate an item in your project, on the Edit menu, point to Find And Replace, and then click Quick Find. A menu opens in the upper-right corner of the Code and Text Editor window. In the text box in this shortcut menu, type the name of the item you're looking for, and then click Find Next (the right-arrow symbol next to the text box):



By default, the search is not case sensitive. If you want to perform a case-sensitive search, click the down arrow next to the text to search for, click the drop-down arrow to the right of the text box in the shortcut menu to display additional options, and then select the Match Case check box. If you have time, you can experiment with the other options, as well.

You can also press Ctrl+F to display the Quick Find dialog box rather than using the Edit menu. Similarly, you can press Ctrl+H to display the Quick Replace dialog box.

As an alternative to using the Quick Find functionality, you can also locate the methods in a class by using the class members drop-down list box above the Code and Text Editor window, on the right.



The class members drop-down list box displays all the methods in the class, together with the variables and other items that the class contains. (You will learn more about these items in later chapters.) In the drop-down list, click the *typeSelectionChanged* method, and the cursor will move directly to the *typeSelectionChanged* method in the class.

If you have programmed using another language, you can probably guess how the *typeSelectionChanged* method works; if not, **Chapter 4** makes this code clear. At present, all you need to understand is that when the user clicks an item in the *ListBox* control, the value of the item is passed to this method, which then uses this value to determine what happens next. For example, if the user clicks the *float* value, this method calls another method named *showFloatValue*.

5. Scroll down through the code and find the *showFloatValue* method, which looks like this:

```
private void showFloatValue()
{
    float floatVar;
    floatVar = 0.42F;
    value.Text = floatVar.ToString();
}
```

The body of this method contains three statements. The first statement

declares a variable named *floatVar* of type *float*.

The second statement assigns *floatVar* the value 0.42F.

#### IMPORTANT

The *F* is a type suffix specifying that 0.42 should be treated as a *float* value. If you forget the *F*, the value 0.42 is treated as a *double* and your program will not compile, because you cannot assign a value of one type to a variable of a different type without writing additional code—C# is very strict in this respect.

The third statement displays the value of this variable in the value text box on the form. This statement requires your attention. As is illustrated in [Chapter 1](#), the way in which you display an item in a text box is to set its *Text* property (you did this by using XAML in [Chapter 1](#)). You can also perform this task programmatically, which is what is going on here. Notice that you access the property of an object by using the same dot notation that you saw for running a method. (Remember *Console.WriteLine* from [Chapter 1](#)?) Also, the data that you put in the *Text* property must be a string and not a number. If you try to assign a number to the *Text* property, your program will not compile. Fortunately, the .NET Framework provides some help in the form of the *ToString* method.

Every data type in the .NET Framework has a *ToString* method. The purpose of *ToString* is to convert an object to its string representation. The *showFloatValue* method uses the *ToString* method of the *float* variable *floatVar* object to generate a string version of the value of this variable. You can then safely assign this string to the *Text* property of the value text box. When you create your own data types and classes, you can define your own implementation of the *ToString* method to specify how your class should be represented as a string. You learn more about creating your own classes in [Chapter 7](#).

6. In the Code and Text Editor window, locate the *showIntValue* method:

```
private void showIntValue()
{
    value.Text = "to do";
}
```

The *showIntValue* method is called when you click the *int* type in the list box.

7. Type the following two statements at the start of the *showIntValue* method, on a new line after the opening brace, as shown in bold type in the following code:

```
private void showIntValue()
{
    int intVar;
    intVar = 42;
    value.Text = "to do";
}
```

The first statement creates a variable called *intVar* that can hold an *int* value. The second statement assigns the value 42 to this variable.

8. In the original statement in this method, change the string “to do” to *intVar.ToString()*;

The method should now look exactly like this:

```
private void showIntValue()
{
    int intVar;
    intVar = 42;
    value.Text = intVar.ToString();
}
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

The form appears again.

10. In the Choose A Data Type list, select the *int* type. Confirm that the value 42 is displayed in the Sample Value text box.
11. Return to Visual Studio and then, on the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.
12. In the Code and Text Editor window, find the *showDoubleValue* method.

13. Edit the *showDoubleValue* method exactly as shown in bold type in the following code:

```
private void showDoubleValue()
{
    double doubleVar;
    doubleVar = 0.42;
    value.Text = doubleVar.ToString();
}
```

This code is similar to the *showIntValue* method, except that it creates a variable called *doubleVar* that holds double values, and it is assigned the value 0.42.

14. In the Code and Text Editor window, locate the *showBoolValue* method.
15. Edit the *showBoolValue* method exactly as follows:

```
private void showBoolValue()
{
    bool boolVar;
    boolVar = false;
    value.Text = boolVar.ToString();
}
```

Again, this code is similar to the previous examples, except that *boolVar* can only hold a Boolean value, *true* or *false*. In this case, the value assigned is *false*.

16. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
17. In the Choose A Data Type list, select the *int*, *double*, and *bool* types. In each case, verify that the correct value is displayed in the Sample Value text box.
18. Return to Visual Studio and then, on the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.

## Using arithmetic operators

C# supports the regular arithmetic operations you learned in your childhood: the plus sign (+) for addition, the minus sign (−) for subtraction, the asterisk (\*) for multiplication, and the forward slash (/) for division. The symbols +, −, \*, and / are called *operators* because they “operate” on values to create new values. In the following example, the variable *moneyPaidToConsultant* ends up holding the product of 750 (the daily rate) and 20 (the number of days the consultant was employed):

```
long moneyPaidToConsultant;  
moneyPaidToConsultant = 750 * 20;
```

### NOTE

The values on which an operator performs its function are called *operands*. In the expression 750 20, *the* is the operator, and 750 and 20 are the operands.

## Operators and types

Not all operators are applicable to all data types. The operators that you can use on a value depend on the value’s type. For example, you can use all the arithmetic operators on values of type *char*, *int*, *long*, *float*, *double*, or *decimal*. However, with the exception of the plus operator, +, you can’t use the arithmetic operators on values of type *string*, and you cannot use any of them with values of type *bool*. So, the following statement is not allowed, because the *string* type does not support the minus operator (subtracting one string from another is meaningless):

```
// compile-time error  
Console.WriteLine("Gillingham" - "Forest Green Rovers");
```

However, you can use the + operator to concatenate string values. You need to be careful because this can have unexpected results. For example, the following statement writes “431” (not “44”) to the console:

```
Console.WriteLine("43" + "1");
```

---

### TIP

The .NET Framework provides a method called *Int32.Parse* that you can use to convert a string value to an integer if you need to perform arithmetic computations on values held as strings.

You should also be aware that the type of the result of an arithmetic operation depends on the type of the operands used. For example, the value of the expression  $5.0/2.0$  is 2.5; the type of both operands is *double*, so the type of the result is also *double*. (In C#, literal numbers with decimal points are always *double*, not *float*, to maintain as much accuracy as possible.) However, the value of the expression  $5/2$  is 2. In this case, the type of both operands is *int*, so the type of the result is also *int*. C# always rounds toward zero in circumstances like this. The situation gets a little more complicated if you mix the types of the operands. For example, the expression  $5/2.0$  consists of an *int* and a *double*. The C# compiler detects the mismatch and generates code that converts the *int* into a *double* before performing the operation. The result of the operation is therefore a *double* (2.5). However, although this works, it is considered poor practice to mix types in this way.

C# also supports one less-familiar arithmetic operator: the *remainder*, or *modulus*, operator, which is represented by the percent sign (%). The result of  $x \% y$  is the remainder after dividing the value  $x$  by the value  $y$ . So, for example,  $9 \% 2$  is 1 because 9 divided by 2 is 4, remainder 1.

### NOTE

If you are familiar with C or C++, you know that you can't use the remainder operator on *float* or *double* values in these languages. However, C# relaxes this rule. The remainder operator is valid with all numeric types, and the result is not necessarily an integer. For example, the result of the expression  $7.0 \% 2.4$  is 2.2.

## NUMERIC TYPES AND INFINITE VALUES

There are one or two other features of numbers in C# about which you should be aware. For example, the result of dividing any number by zero is infinity, which is outside the range of the *int*, *long*, and *decimal* types; consequently, evaluating an expression such as  $5/0$  results in an error. However, the *double* and *float* types actually have a special value that can represent infinity, and the value of the

expression  $5.0/0.0$  is *Infinity*. The one exception to this rule is the value of the expression  $0.0/0.0$ . Usually, if you divide zero by anything, the result is zero, but if you divide anything by zero the result is infinity. The expression  $0.0/0.0$  results in a paradox—the value must be zero and infinity at the same time. C# has another special value for this situation called *NaN*, which stands for “not a number.” So if you evaluate  $0.0/0.0$ , the result is *NaN*.

*NaN* and *Infinity* propagate through expressions. If you evaluate  $10 + NaN$ , the result is *NaN*, and if you evaluate  $10 + Infinity$ , the result is *Infinity*. The one exception to this rule is the case when you multiply *Infinity* by 0. The value of the expression  $Infinity * 0$  is 0, although the value of  $NaN * 0$  is *NaN*.

## Examining arithmetic operators

The following exercise demonstrates how to use the arithmetic operators on *int* values.

Run the MathsOperators project

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the MathsOperators project, located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 2\Windows X\MathsOperators folder in your Documents folder.
3. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

If you are using Windows 8.1, the following page appears:

001 000

Left Operand

064 000

Right Operand

☒ + Addition  
☐ - Subtraction  
☐ \* Multiplication  
☐ / Division  
☐ % Remainder

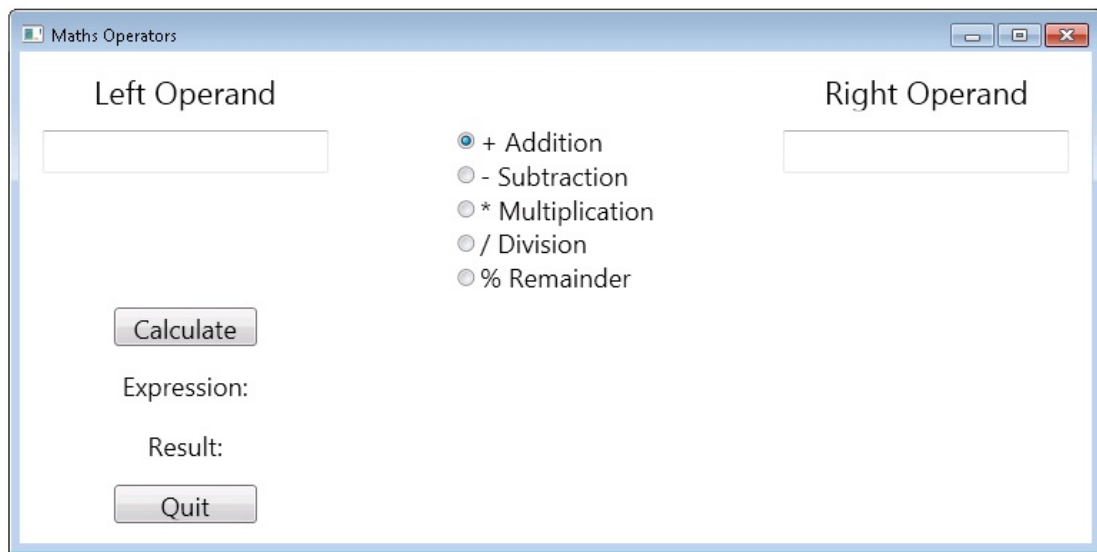
Calculate

Expression:

Result:



If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, the following form displays:



The screenshot shows a window titled "Maths Operators". It has two text input boxes: "Left Operand" and "Right Operand". Between them is a list of operators with radio buttons: "+ Addition" (selected), "- Subtraction", "\* Multiplication", "/ Division", and "% Remainder". Below the "Left Operand" box is a "Calculate" button. At the bottom left are labels for "Expression:" and "Result:", each followed by a text box. A "Quit" button is at the bottom center.

4. In the Left Operand box, type **54**.

5. In the Right Operand box, type **13**.

You can now apply any of the operators to the values in the text boxes.

6. Click the – Subtraction option, and then click Calculate.

The text in the Expression box changes to  $54 - 13$ , but the value 0 appears in the Result box; this is clearly wrong.

7. Click the / Division option, and then click Calculate.

The text in the Expression box changes to  $54/13$ , and again the value 0 appears in the Result box.

8. Click the % Remainder button, and then click Calculate.

The text in the Expression box changes to  $54 \% 13$ , but, once again, the value 0 appears in the Result text box. Test the other combinations of numbers and operators; you will find that they all currently yield the value 0.

#### NOTE

If you type a noninteger value into either of the operand boxes, the application detects

an error and displays the message “Input string was not in a correct format.” You will learn more about how to catch and handle errors and exceptions in [Chapter 6](#).

9. When you have finished, return to Visual Studio and then, on the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging (if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, you can also click Quit on the Maths Operators form).

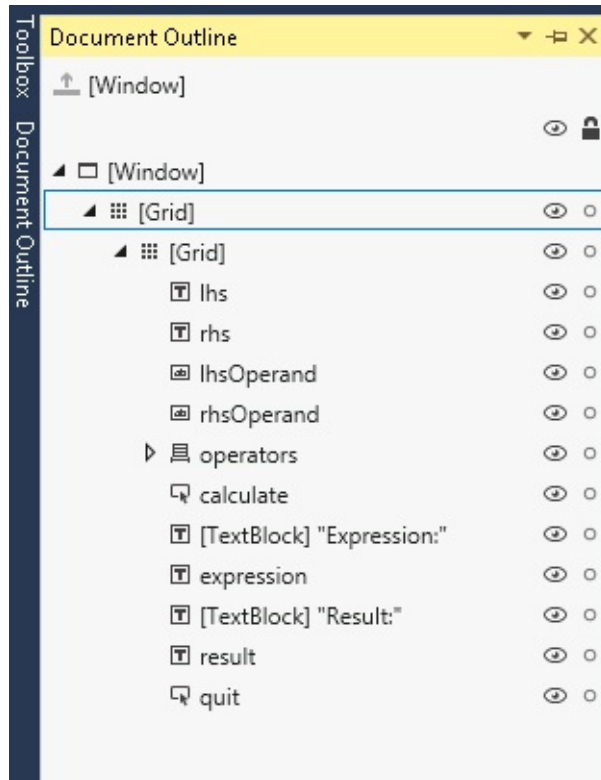
As you might have guessed, none of the calculations is currently implemented by the MathsOperators application. In the next exercise, you will correct this. Perform calculations in the MathsOperators application

1. Display the MainWindow.xaml form in the Design View window. (In Solution Explorer, in the MathsOperators project, double-click the file MainWindow.xaml.)
2. On the View menu, point to Other Windows, and then click Document Outline.

The Document Outline window appears, showing the names and types of the controls on the form. The Document Outline window provides a simple way to locate and select controls on a complex form. The controls are arranged in a hierarchy, starting with the *Page* (Windows 8.1) or *Window* (Windows 7 or Windows 8) that constitutes the form. As mentioned in [Chapter 1](#), a Windows Store app page or a WPF form contains a *Grid* control, and the other controls are placed within this *Grid*. If you expand the *Grid* node in the Document Outline window, the other controls appear, starting with another *Grid* (the outer *Grid* acts as a frame, and the inner *Grid* contains the controls that you see on the form). If you expand the inner *Grid*, you can see each of the controls on the form.

#### NOTE

In the Windows 8.1 version of the application, the outer *Grid* control is wrapped in a *ScrollViewer* control. This control provides a horizontal scrollbar with which the user can scroll the window displaying the application if she resizes the display window.



If you click any of these controls, the corresponding element is highlighted in the Design View window. Similarly, if you select a control in the Design View window, the corresponding control is selected in the Document Outline window (pin the Document Outline window in place by deselecting the Auto Hide button in the upper-right corner of the Document Outline window to see this in action.)

3. On the form, click the two *TextBox* controls in which the user types numbers. In the Document Outline window, verify that they are named *lhsOperand* and *rhsOperand*.

When the form runs, the *Text* property of each of these controls holds the values that the user enters.

4. Toward the bottom of the form, verify that the *TextBlock* control used to display the expression being evaluated is named *expression* and that the *TextBlock* control used to display the result of the calculation is named *result*.
5. Close the Document Outline window.

6. On the View menu, click Code to display the code for the `MainWindow.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window.
7. In the Code and Text Editor window, locate the `addValues` method. It looks like this:

```
private void addValues()
{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int outcome = 0;
    // TODO: Add rhs to lhs and store the result in outcome
    expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " + " + rhsOperand.Text;
    result.Text = outcome.ToString();
}
```

The first statement in this method declares an *int* variable called *lhs* and initializes it with the integer corresponding to the value typed by the user in the *lhsOperand* box. Remember that the *Text* property of a *TextBox* control contains a string, but *lhs* is an *int*, so you must convert this string to an integer before you can assign it to *lhs*. The *int* data type provides the *int.Parse* method, which does precisely this.

The second statement declares an *int* variable called *rhs* and initializes it to the value in the *rhsOperand* box after converting it to an *int*.

The third statement declares an *int* variable called *outcome*.

A comment stating that you need to add *rhs* to *lhs* and store the result in *outcome* follows. This is the missing bit of code that you need to implement, which you will do in the next step.

The fifth statement concatenates three strings indicating the calculation being performed (using the plus operator, `+`) and assigns the result to the *expression.Text* property. This causes the string to appear in the Expression box on the form.

The final statement displays the result of the calculation by assigning it to the *Text* property of the Result box. Remember that the *Text* property is a string, and the result of the calculation is an *int*, so you must convert the *int* to a string before assigning it to the *Text* property. Recall that this is what

the *ToString* method of the *int* type does.

8. Below the comment in the middle of the *addValues* method, add the following statement (shown below in bold):

```
private void addValues()
{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int outcome = 0;
    // TODO: Add rhs to lhs and store the result in outcome
    outcome = lhs + rhs;
    expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " + " + rhsOperand.Text;
    result.Text = outcome.ToString();
}
```

This statement evaluates the expression *lhs + rhs* and stores the result in *outcome*.

9. Examine the *subtractValues* method. You should see that it follows a similar pattern, and you need to add the statement to calculate the result of subtracting *rhs* from *lhs* and storing it in *outcome*. Add the following statement (in bold) to this method:

```
private void subtractValues()
{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int outcome = 0;
    // TODO: Subtract rhs from lhs and store the result in outcome
    outcome = lhs - rhs;
    expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " - " + rhsOperand.Text;
    result.Text = outcome.ToString();
}
```

10. Examine the *multiplyValues*, *divideValues*, and *remainderValues* methods. Again, they all have the crucial statement that performs the specified calculation missing. Add the appropriate statements to these methods (shown in bold).

```
private void multiplyValues()
```

```

{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int outcome = 0;
    // TODO: Multiply lhs by rhs and store the result in outcome
    outcome = lhs * rhs;
    expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " * " + rhsOperand.Text;
    result.Text = outcome.ToString();
}
private void divideValues()
{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int outcome = 0;
    // TODO: Divide lhs by rhs and store the result in outcome
    outcome = lhs / rhs;
    expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " / " + rhsOperand.Text;
    result.Text = outcome.ToString();
}
private void remainderValues()
{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int outcome = 0;
    // TODO: Work out the remainder after dividing lhs by rhs and store the
    result in
    outcome
    outcome = lhs % rhs;
    expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " % " + rhsOperand.Text;
    result.Text = outcome.ToString();
}

```

### Test the MathsOperators application

1. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
2. Type **54** in the Left Operand box, type **13** in the Right Operand box, click the + Addition button, and then click Calculate.  
The value 67 should appear in the Result box.
3. Click the – Subtraction option and then click Calculate. Verify that the result is now 41.

4. Click the \* Multiplication option and then click Calculate. Verify that the result is now 702.
5. Click the / Division option and then click Calculate. Verify that the result is now 4.

In real life,  $54/13$  is 4.153846 recurring, but this is not real life—this is C# performing integer division. When you divide one integer by another integer, the answer you get back is an integer, as explained earlier.

6. Click the % Remainder option and then click Calculate. Verify that the result is now 2.

When dealing with integers, the remainder after dividing 54 by 13 is 2;  $(54 - ((54/13) * 13))$  is 2. This is because the calculation rounds down to an integer at each stage. (My high school math teacher would be horrified to be told that  $(54/13) * 13$  does not equal 54!)

7. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging (or click Quit if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8).

## Controlling precedence

*Precedence* governs the order in which an expression's operators are evaluated. Consider the following expression, which uses the + and \* operators:

$2 + 3 * 4$

This expression is potentially ambiguous: do you perform the addition first or the multiplication? The order of the operations matters because it changes the result:

- If you perform the addition first, followed by the multiplication, the result of the addition ( $2 + 3$ ) forms the left operand of the \* operator, and the result of the whole expression is  $5 * 4$ , which is 20.
- If you perform the multiplication first, followed by the addition, the result of the multiplication ( $3 * 4$ ) forms the right operand of the + operator, and the result of the whole expression is  $2 + 12$ , which is 14.

In C#, the multiplicative operators (\*, /, and %) have precedence over the additive operators (+ and -), so in expressions such as  $2 + 3 * 4$ , *the multiplication is performed first, followed by the addition. The answer to  $2 + 3 * 4$  is therefore 14.*

You can use parentheses to override precedence and force operands to bind to operators in a different way. For example, in the following expression, the parentheses force the 2 and the 3 to bind to the + operator (making 5), and the result of this addition forms the left operand of the \* operator to produce the value 20:

$(2 + 3) * 4$

#### NOTE

The term *parentheses* or *round brackets* refers to (). The term *braces* or *curly brackets* refers to { }. The term *square brackets* refers to [ ].

## Using associativity to evaluate expressions

Operator precedence is only half the story. What happens when an expression contains different operators that have the same precedence? This is where *associativity* becomes important. Associativity is the direction (left or right) in which the operands of an operator are evaluated. Consider the following expression that uses the / and \* operators:

$4 / 2 * 6$

At first glance, this expression is potentially ambiguous. Do you perform the division first or the multiplication? The precedence of both operators is the same (they are both multiplicative), but the order in which the operators in the expression are applied is important because you can get two different results:

- If you perform the division first, the result of the division ( $4/2$ ) forms the left operand of the *operator*, *and the result of the whole expression is ( $4/2$ ) 6*, or 12.
- If you perform the multiplication first, the result of the multiplication ( $2 * 6$ )



*forms the right operand of the operator, and the result of the whole expression is  $4(2\ 6)$ , or  $4/12$ .*

In this case, the associativity of the operators determines how the expression is evaluated. The `*` and `/` operators are both left-associative, which means that the operands are evaluated from left to right. In this case, `42` will be evaluated before multiplying by `6`, giving the result `12`.

## Associativity and the assignment operator

In C#, the equal sign (`=`) is an operator. All operators return a value based on their operands. The assignment operator `=` is no different. It takes two operands: the operand on the right side is evaluated and then stored in the operand on the left side. The value of the assignment operator is the value that was assigned to the left operand. For example, in the following assignment statement, the value returned by the assignment operator is `10`, which is also the value assigned to the variable `myInt`:

```
int myInt;  
myInt = 10; // value of assignment expression is 10
```

At this point, you might be thinking that this is all very nice and esoteric, but so what? Well, because the assignment operator returns a value, you can use this same value with another occurrence of the assignment statement, like this:

```
int myInt;  
int myInt2;  
myInt2 = myInt = 10;
```

The value assigned to the variable `myInt2` is the value that was assigned to `myInt`. The assignment statement assigns the same value to both variables. This technique is useful if you want to initialize several variables to the same value. It makes it very clear to anyone reading your code that all the variables must have the same value:

```
myInt5 = myInt4 = myInt3 = myInt2 = myInt = 10;
```

From this discussion, you can probably deduce that the assignment operator

associates from right to left. The rightmost assignment occurs first, and the value assigned propagates through the variables from right to left. If any of the variables previously had a value, it is overwritten by the value being assigned.

You should treat this construct with caution, however. One frequent mistake that new C# programmers make is to try to combine this use of the assignment operator with variable declarations. For example, you might expect the following code to create and initialize three variables with the same value (10):

```
int myInt, myInt2, myInt3 = 10;
```

This is legal C# code (because it compiles). What it does is declare the variables *myInt*, *myInt2*, and *myInt3*, and initialize *myInt3* with the value 10. However, it does not initialize *myInt* or *myInt2*. If you try to use *myInt* or *myInt2* in an expression such as

```
myInt3 = myInt / myInt2;
```

the compiler generates the following errors:

```
Use of unassigned local variable 'myInt'  
Use of unassigned local variable 'myInt2'
```

## Incrementing and decrementing variables

If you want to add 1 to a variable, you can use the + operator, as demonstrated here:

```
count = count + 1;
```

However, adding 1 to a variable is so common that C# provides its own operator just for this purpose: the ++ operator. To increment the variable *count* by 1, you can write the following statement:

```
count++;
```

Similarly, C# provides the -- operator that you can use to subtract 1 from a variable, like this:

```
count--;
```

The `++` and `--` operators are *unary* operators, meaning that they take only a single operand. They share the same precedence and are both left-associative.

## Prefix and postfix

The increment (`++`) and decrement (`--`) operators are unusual in that you can place them either before or after the variable. Placing the operator symbol before the variable is called the *prefix form* of the operator, and using the operator symbol after the variable is called the *postfix form*. Here are examples:

```
count++; // postfix increment
++count; // prefix increment
count--; // postfix decrement
--count; // prefix decrement
```

Whether you use the prefix or postfix form of the `++` or `--` operator makes no difference to the variable being incremented or decremented. For example, if you write `count++`, the value of `count` increases by 1, and if you write `++count`, the value of `count` also increases by 1. Knowing this, you're probably wondering why there are two ways to write the same thing. To understand the answer, you must remember that `++` and `--` are operators and that all operators are used to evaluate an expression that has a value. The value returned by `count++` is the value of `count` before the increment takes place, whereas the value returned by `++count` is the value of `count` after the increment takes place. Here is an example:

```
int x;
x = 42;
Console.WriteLine(x++); // x is now 43, 42 written out
x = 42;
Console.WriteLine(++x); // x is now 43, 43 written out
```

The way to remember which operand does what is to look at the order of the elements (the operand and the operator) in a prefix or postfix expression. In the expression `x++`, the variable `x` occurs first, so its value is used as the value of the

expression before *x* is incremented. In the expression `++x`, the operator occurs first, so its operation is performed before the value of *x* is evaluated as the result.

These operators are most commonly used in *while* and *do* statements, which are presented in [Chapter 5](#). If you are using the increment and decrement operators in isolation, stick to the postfix form and be consistent.

## Declaring implicitly typed local variables

Earlier in this chapter, you saw that you declare a variable by specifying a data type and an identifier, like this:

```
int myInt;
```

It was also mentioned that you should assign a value to a variable before you attempt to use it. You can declare and initialize a variable in the same statement, such as illustrated in the following:

```
int myInt = 99;
```

Or, you can even do it like this, assuming that *myOtherInt* is an initialized integer variable:

```
int myInt = myOtherInt * 99;
```

Now, remember that the value you assign to a variable must be of the same type as the variable. For example, you can assign an *int* value only to an *int* variable. The C# compiler can quickly work out the type of an expression used to initialize a variable and indicate if it does not match the type of the variable. You can also ask the C# compiler to infer the type of a variable from an expression and use this type when declaring the variable by using the *var* keyword in place of the type, as demonstrated here:

```
var myVariable = 99;  
var myOtherVariable = "Hello";
```

The variables *myVariable* and *myOtherVariable* are referred to as *implicitly*

*typed* variables. The *var* keyword causes the compiler to deduce the type of the variables from the types of the expressions used to initialize them. In these examples, *myVariable* is an *int*, and *myOtherVariable* is a *string*. However, it is important for you to understand that this is a convenience for declaring variables only, and that after a variable has been declared you can assign only values of the inferred type to it—you cannot assign *float*, *double*, or *string* values to *myVariable* at a later point in your program, for example. You should also understand that you can use the *var* keyword only when you supply an expression to initialize a variable. The following declaration is illegal and causes a compilation error:

```
var yetAnotherVariable; // Error - compiler cannot infer type
```

#### IMPORTANT

If you have programmed with Visual Basic in the past, you might be familiar with the *Variant* type, which you can use to store any type of value in a variable. I emphasize here and now that you should forget everything you ever learned when programming with Visual Basic about *Variant* variables. Although the keywords look similar, *var* and *Variant* mean totally different things. When you declare a variable in C# by using the *var* keyword, the type of values that you assign to the variable *cannot change* from that used to initialize the variable.

If you are a purist, you are probably gritting your teeth at this point and wondering why on earth the designers of a neat language such as C# should allow a feature such as *var* to creep in. After all, it sounds like an excuse for extreme laziness on the part of programmers and can make it more difficult to understand what a program is doing or track down bugs (and it can even easily introduce new bugs into your code). However, trust me that *var* has a very valid place in C#, as you will see when you work through many of the following chapters. However, for the time being, we will stick to using explicitly typed variables except for when implicit typing becomes a necessity.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to create and use variables, and you learned about some of the common data types available for variables in C#. You learned about identifiers. In addition, you used a number of operators to build expressions, and

you learned how the precedence and associativity of operators determine how expressions are evaluated.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 3**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick Reference

To	Do this
Declare a variable	Write the name of the data type, followed by the name of the variable, followed by a semicolon. For example:  <code>int outcome;</code>
Declare a variable and give it an initial value	Write the name of the data type, followed by the name of the variable, followed by the assignment operator and the initial value. Finish with a semicolon. For example:  <code>int outcome = 99;</code>
Change the value of a variable	Write the name of the variable on the left, followed by the assignment operator, followed by the expression calculating the new value, followed by a semicolon. For example:  <code>outcome = 42;</code>
Generate a string representation of the value in a variable	Call the ToString method of the variable. For example:  <code>int intVar = 42; string stringVar = intVar.ToString();</code>
Convert a string to an int	Call the System.Int32.Parse method. For example:  <code>string stringVar = "42";</code>

	<pre>string stringVar = "42", int intVar = System.Int32.Parse(stringVar);</pre>
Override the precedence of an operator	<p>Use parentheses in the expression to force the order of evaluation. For example:</p> <pre>(3 + 4) * 5</pre>
Assign the same value to several variables	<p>Use an assignment statement that lists all the variables. For example:</p> <pre>myInt4 = myInt3 = myInt2 = myInt = 10;</pre>
Increment or decrement a variable	<p>Use the ++ or -- operator. For example:</p> <pre>count++;</pre>

# Chapter 3. Writing methods and applying scope

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **Creating methods**
- Pass information to a method.
- **Returning data from a method**
- **Defining local scope**
- **Using optional parameters and named arguments**

In **Chapter 2** you learned how to declare variables, how to create expressions using operators, and how precedence and associativity control the way in which expressions containing multiple operators are evaluated. In this chapter, you'll learn about methods. You'll see how to declare and call methods, and you'll also learn how to use arguments and parameters to pass information to a method as well as return information from a method by using a *return* statement. You'll see how to step into and out of methods by using the Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 integrated debugger. This information is useful when you need to trace the execution of your methods if they do not work quite as you expect. Finally, you'll also learn how to declare methods that take optional parameters and how to invoke methods by using named arguments.

## Creating methods

A *method* is a named sequence of statements. If you have previously programmed by using a language such as C, C++, or Microsoft Visual Basic, you will see that a method is similar to a function or a subroutine. A method has



a name and a body. The method name should be a meaningful identifier that indicates the overall purpose of the method (*calculateIncomeTax*, for example). The method body contains the actual statements to be run when the method is called. Additionally, methods can be given some data for processing and can return information, which is usually the result of the processing. Methods are a fundamental and powerful mechanism.

## Declaring a method

The syntax for declaring a C# method is as follows:

```
returnType methodName ( parameterList )
{
    // method body statements go here
}
```

The following is a description of the elements that make up a declaration:

- The *returnType* is the name of a type and specifies the kind of information the method returns as a result of its processing. This can be any type, such as *int* or *string*. If you're writing a method that does not return a value, you must use the keyword *void* in place of the return type.
- The *methodName* is the name used to call the method. Method names follow the same identifier rules as variable names. For example, *addValues* is a valid method name, whereas *add\$Values* is not. For now, you should follow the camelCase convention for method names; for example, *displayCustomer*.
- The *parameterList* is optional and describes the types and names of the information that you can pass into the method for it to process. You write the parameters between opening and closing parentheses, ( ), as though you're declaring variables, with the name of the type followed by the name of the parameter. If the method you're writing has two or more parameters, you must separate them with commas.
- The method body statements are the lines of code that are run when the method is called. They are enclosed between opening and closing braces, { }.

### IMPORTANT

If you program in C, C++, and Visual Basic, you should note that C# does not support global methods. You must write all your methods inside a class; otherwise, your code will not compile.

Here's the definition of a method called *addValues* that returns an *int* result and has two *int* parameters, *leftHandSide* and *rightHandSide*:

```
int addValues(int leftHandSide, int rightHandSide)
{
    // ...
    // method body statements go here
    // ...
}
```

### NOTE

You must explicitly specify the types of any parameters and the return type of a method. You cannot use the *var* keyword.

Here's the definition of a method called *showResult* that does not return a value and has a single *int* parameter, called *answer*:

```
void showResult(int answer)
{
    // ...
}
```

Notice the use of the keyword *void* to indicate that the method does not return anything.

### IMPORTANT

If you're familiar with Visual Basic, notice that C# does not use different keywords to distinguish between a method that returns a value (a function) and a method that does not return a value (a procedure or subroutine). You must always specify either a return type or *void*.

## Returning data from a method

If you want a method to return information (that is, its return type is not *void*), you must include a *return* statement at the end of the processing in the method body. A *return* statement consists of the keyword *return* followed by an expression that specifies the returned value, and a semicolon. The type of the expression must be the same as the type specified by the method declaration. For example, if a method returns an *int*, the *return* statement must return an *int*; otherwise, your program will not compile. Here is an example of a method with a *return* statement:

```
int addValues(int leftHandSide, int rightHandSide)
{
    // ...
    return leftHandSide + rightHandSide;
}
```

The *return* statement is usually positioned at the end of the method because it causes the method to finish, and control returns to the statement that called the method, as described later in this chapter. Any statements that occur after the *return* statement are not executed (although the compiler warns you about this problem if you place statements after the *return* statement).

If you don't want your method to return information (that is, its return type is *void*), you can use a variation of the *return* statement to cause an immediate exit from the method. You write the keyword *return* and follow it immediately by a semicolon. For example:

```
void showResult(int answer)
{
    // display the answer
    ...
    return;
}
```

If your method does not return anything, you can also omit the *return* statement because the method finishes automatically when execution arrives at the closing brace at the end of the method. Although this practice is common, it is not always considered good style.

In the following exercise, you will examine another version of the MathsOperators project from [Chapter 2](#). This version has been improved by the careful use of some small methods. Dividing code in this way helps to make it easier to understand and more maintainable.

Examine method definitions

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Methods project, which is in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 3\Methods folder in your Documents folder.
3. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

Visual Studio 2013 builds and runs the application. It should look the same as the application from [Chapter 2](#).

4. Refamiliarize yourself with the application and how it works and then return to Visual Studio. On the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging (or click Quit in the Methods window if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8).
5. Display the code for MainWindow.xaml.cs in the Code and Text Editor window (in Solution Explorer, expand the MainWindow.xaml file and then double-click MainWindow.xaml.cs).
6. In the Code and Text Editor window, locate the *addValues* method, which looks like this:

```
private int addValues(int leftHandSide, int rightHandSide)
{
    expression.Text = leftHandSide.ToString() + " + " +
rightHandSide.ToString();
    return leftHandSide + rightHandSide;
}
```

#### NOTE

For the moment, don't worry about the *private* keyword at the start of the definition of this method; you will learn what this keyword means in [Chapter 7](#).

The *addValues* method contains two statements. The first statement displays the calculation being performed in the *expression* box on the form. The values of the parameters *leftHandSide* and *rightHandSide* are converted to strings (using the *ToString* method described in [Chapter 2](#)) and concatenated together by using the string version of the plus operator (+).

The second statement uses the *int* version of the + operator to add the values of the *leftHandSide* and *rightHandSide* *int* variables together, and then returns the result of this operation. Remember that adding two *int* values together creates another *int* value, so the return type of the *addValues* method is *int*.

If you look at the methods *subtractValues*, *multiplyValues*, *divideValues*, and *remainderValues*, you will see that they follow a similar pattern.

7. In the Code and Text Editor window, locate the *showResult* method, which looks like this:

```
private void showResult(int answer)
{
    result.Text = answer.ToString();
}
```

This method contains one statement that displays a string representation of the *answer* parameter in the *result* box. It does not return a value, so the type of this method is *void*.

#### TIP

There is no minimum length for a method. If a method helps to avoid repetition and makes your program easier to understand, the method is useful regardless of how small it is.

There is also no maximum length for a method, but usually you want to keep your method code small enough to get the job done. If your method is more than one screen in length, consider breaking it into smaller methods for readability.

## Calling methods

Methods exist to be called! You call a method by name to ask it to perform its

task. If the method requires information (as specified by its parameters), you must supply the information requested. If the method returns information (as specified by its return type), you should arrange to capture this information somehow.

## Specifying the method call syntax

The syntax of a C# method call is as follows:

```
result = methodName ( argumentList )
```

- The following is a description of the elements that make up a method call:
- The *methodName* must exactly match the name of the method you're calling. Remember, C# is a case-sensitive language.
- The *result =* clause is optional. If specified, the variable identified by *result* contains the value returned by the method. If the method is *void* (that is, it does not return a value), you must omit the *result =* clause of the statement. If you don't specify the *result =* clause and the method does return a value, the method runs but the return value is discarded.
- The *argumentList* supplies the information that the method accepts. You must supply an argument for each parameter, and the value of each argument must be compatible with the type of its corresponding parameter. If the method you're calling has two or more parameters, you must separate the arguments with commas.

### IMPORTANT

You must include the parentheses in every method call, even when calling a method that has no arguments.

To clarify these points, take a look at the *addValues* method again:

```
int addValues(int leftHandSide, int rightHandSide)
{
    // ...
}
```

5

The *addValues* method has two *int* parameters, so you must call it with two comma-separated *int* arguments, such as this:

```
addValues(39, 3);    // okay
```

You can also replace the literal values 39 and 3 with the names of *int* variables. The values in those variables are then passed to the method as its arguments, like this:

```
int arg1 = 99;  
int arg2 = 1;  
addValues(arg1, arg2);
```

If you try to call *addValues* in some other way, you will probably not succeed for the reasons described in the following examples:

```
addValues;           // compile-time error, no parentheses  
addValues();         // compile-time error, not enough arguments  
addValues(39);       // compile-time error, not enough arguments  
addValues("39", "3"); // compile-time error, wrong types for arguments
```

The *addValues* method returns an *int* value. You can use this *int* value wherever an *int* value can be used. Consider these examples:

```
int result = addValues(39, 3);    // on right-hand side of an assignment  
showResult(addValues(39, 3));    // as argument to another method call
```

The following exercise continues with the Methods application. This time, you will examine some method calls.

Examine method calls

1. Return to the Methods project. (This project is already open in Visual Studio 2013 if you're continuing from the previous exercise. If you are not, open it from the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 3\Windows X\Methods folder in your Documents folder.)
2. Display the code for MainWindow.xaml.cs in the Code and Text Editor window.

3. Locate the *calculateClick* method and look at the first two statements of this method after the *try* statement and opening brace. (You will learn about *try* statements in [Chapter 6](#).)

These statements look like this:

```
int leftHandSide = System.Int32.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);  
int rightHandSide = System.Int32.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
```

These two statements declare two *int* variables, called *leftHandSide* and *rightHandSide*. Notice the way in which the variables are initialized. In both cases, the *Parse* method of the *System.Int32* class is called. (*System* is a namespace, and *Int32* is the name of the class in this namespace.) You have seen this method before—it takes a single *string* parameter and converts it to an *int* value. These two lines of code take whatever the user has typed into the *lhsOperand* and *rhsOperand* text box controls on the form and converts them to *int* values.

4. Look at the fourth statement in the *calculateClick* method (after the *if* statement and another opening brace):

```
calculatedValue = addValues(leftHandSide, rightHandSide);
```

This statement calls the *addValues* method, passing the values of the *leftHandSide* and *rightHandSide* variables as its arguments. The value returned by the *addValues* method is stored in the *calculatedValue* variable.

5. Look at the next statement:

```
showResult(calculatedValue);
```

This statement calls the *showResult* method, passing the value in the *calculatedValue* variable as its argument. The *showResult* method does not return a value.

6. In the Code and Text Editor window, find the *showResult* method you looked at earlier.



The only statement of this method is this:

```
result.Text = answer.ToString();
```

Notice that the *ToString* method call uses parentheses even though there are no arguments.

#### TIP

You can call methods belonging to other objects by prefixing the method with the name of the object. In the preceding example, the expression *answer.ToString()* calls the method named *ToString* belonging to the object called *answer*.

## Applying scope

You create variables to hold values. You can create variables at various points in your applications. For example, the *calculateClick* method in the *Methods* project creates an *int* variable called *calculatedValue* and assigns it an initial value of zero, like this:

```
private void calculateClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    int calculatedValue = 0;
    ...
}
```

This variable comes into existence at the point where it is defined, and subsequent statements in the *calculateClick* method can then use this variable. This is an important point: a variable can be used only after it has been created. When the method has finished, this variable disappears and cannot be used elsewhere.

When a variable can be accessed at a particular location in a program, the variable is said to be in *scope* at that location. The *calculatedValue* variable has method scope; it can be accessed throughout the *calculateClick* method but not outside of that method. You can also define variables with different scope; for example, you can define a variable outside of a method but within a class, and this variable can be accessed by any method within that class. Such a variable is

said to have *class scope*.

To put it another way, the scope of a variable is simply the region of the program in which that variable is usable. Scope applies to methods as well as variables. The scope of an identifier (of a variable or method) is linked to the location of the declaration that introduces the identifier in the program, as you will learn next.

## Defining local scope

The opening and closing braces that form the body of a method define the scope of the method. Any variables you declare inside the body of a method are scoped to that method; they disappear when the method ends and can be accessed only by code running in that method. These variables are called *local variables* because they are local to the method in which they are declared; they are not in scope in any other method.

The scope of local variables means that you cannot use them to share information between methods. Consider this example:

```
class Example
{
    void firstMethod()
    {
        int myVar;
        ...
    }
    void anotherMethod()
    {
        myVar = 42; // error - variable not in scope
        ...
    }
}
```

This code fails to compile because *anotherMethod* is trying to use the variable *myVar*, which is not in scope. The variable *myVar* is available only to statements in *firstMethod* that occur after the line of code that declares *myVar*.

## Defining class scope

The opening and closing braces that form the body of a class define the scope of

that class. Any variables you declare within the body of a class (but not within a method) are scoped to that class. The proper C# term for a variable defined by a class is *field*. As mentioned earlier, in contrast with local variables, you can use fields to share information between methods. Here is an example:

```
class Example
{
    void firstMethod()
    {
        myField = 42; // ok
        ...
    }
    void anotherMethod()
    {
        myField++; // ok
        ...
    }
    int myField = 0;
}
```

The variable *myField* is defined in the class but outside the methods *firstMethod* and *anotherMethod*. Therefore, *myField* has class scope and is available for use by all methods in that class.

There is one other point to notice about this example. In a method, you must declare a variable before you can use it. Fields are a little different. A method can use a field before the statement that defines the field—the compiler sorts out the details for you.

## Overloading methods

If two identifiers have the same name and are declared in the same scope, they are said to be *overloaded*. Often an overloaded identifier is a bug that is trapped as a compile-time error. For example, if you declare two local variables with the same name in the same method, the compiler reports an error. Similarly, if you declare two fields with the same name in the same class, or two identical methods in the same class, you also get a compile-time error. This fact might seem hardly worth mentioning, given that everything so far has turned out to be a compile-time error. However, there is a way that you can overload an identifier for a method, and that way is both useful and important.

Consider the *WriteLine* method of the *Console* class. You have already used this method for writing a string to the screen. However, when you type *WriteLine* in the Code and Text Editor window when writing C# code, notice that Microsoft IntelliSense gives you 19 different options! Each version of the *WriteLine* method takes a different set of parameters; one version takes no parameters and simply outputs a blank line, another version takes a *bool* parameter and outputs a string representation of its value (*True* or *False*), yet another implementation takes a *decimal* parameter and outputs it as a string, and so on. At compile time, the compiler looks at the types of the arguments you are passing in and then arranges for your application to call the version of the method that has a matching set of parameters. Here is an example:

```
static void Main()
{
    Console.WriteLine("The answer is ");
    Console.WriteLine(42);
}
```

Overloading is primarily useful when you need to perform the same operation on different data types or varying groups of information. You can overload a method when the different implementations have different sets of parameters—that is, when they have the same name but a different number of parameters, or when the types of the parameters differ. When you call a method, you supply a comma-separated list of arguments, and the number and type of the arguments are used by the compiler to select one of the overloaded methods. However, keep in mind that although you can overload the parameters of a method, you can't overload the return type of a method. In other words, you can't declare two methods with the same name that differ only in their return type. (The compiler is clever, but not that clever.)

## Writing methods

In the following exercises, you'll create a method that calculates how much a consultant would charge for a given number of consultancy days at a fixed daily rate. You will start by developing the logic for the application and then use the Generate Method Stub Wizard to help you write the methods that are used by this logic. Next, you'll run these methods in a console application to get a feel

for the program. Finally, you'll use the Visual Studio 2013 debugger to step into and out of the method calls as they run.

Develop the logic for the application

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, open the DailyRate project, which is in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 3\Windows X\DailyRate folder in your Documents folder.
2. In Solution Explorer, in the DailyRate project, double-click the file Program.cs to display the code for the program in the Code and Text Editor window.

This program is simply a test harness for you to try out your code. When the application starts running, it calls the *run* method. You add to the *run* method the code that you want to try. (The way in which the method is called requires an understanding of classes, which you look at in [Chapter 7](#).)

3. Add the following statements shown in bold to the body of the *run* method, between the opening and closing braces:

```
void run()
{
    double dailyRate = readDouble("Enter your daily rate: ");
    int noOfDays = readInt("Enter the number of days: ");
    writeFee(calculateFee(dailyRate, noOfDays));
}
```

The block of code you have just added to the *run* method calls the *readDouble* method (which you will write shortly) to ask the user for the daily rate for the consultant. The next statement calls the *readInt* method (which you will also write) to obtain the number of days. Finally, the *writeFee* method (to be written) is called to display the results on the screen. Notice that the value passed to *writeFee* is the value returned by the *calculateFee* method (the last one you will need to write), which takes the daily rate and the number of days and calculates the total fee payable.

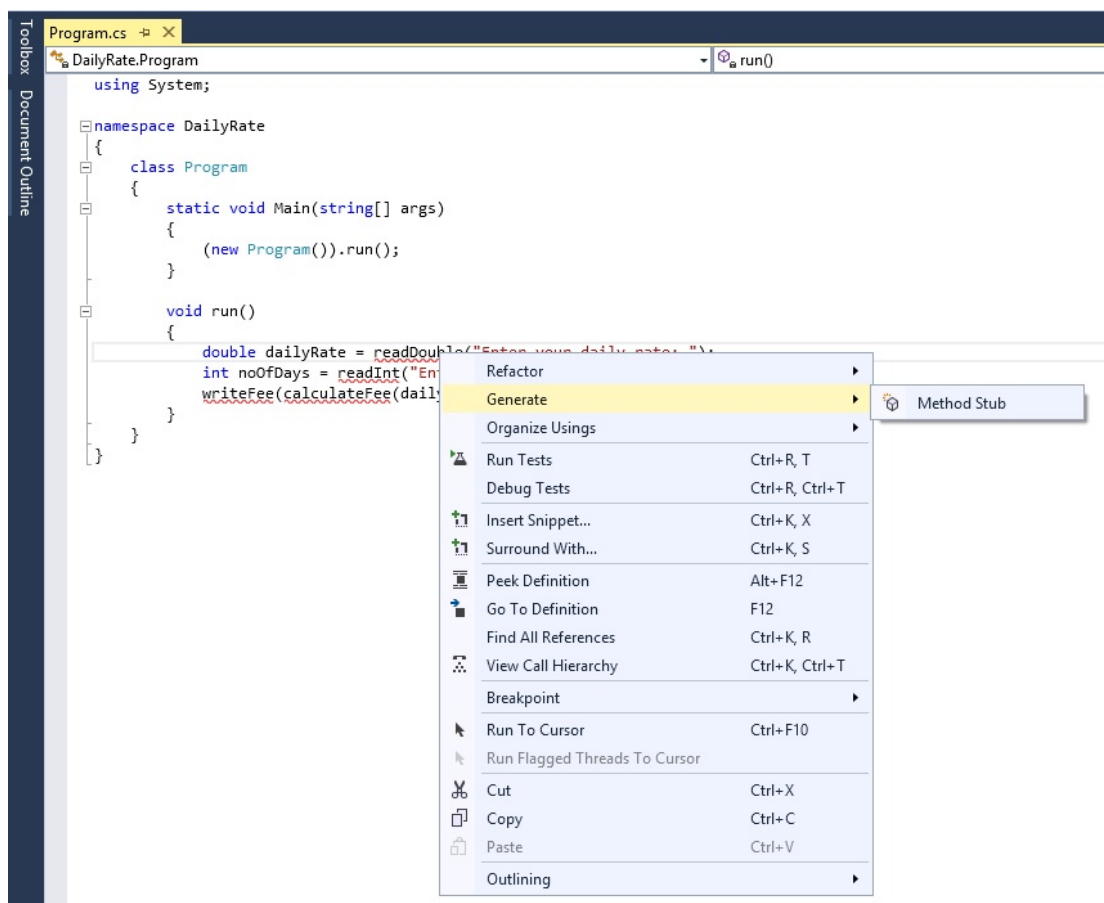
NOTE

You have not yet written the *readDouble*, *readInt*, *writeFee*, and *calculateFee* methods, so IntelliSense does not display these methods when you type this code. Do not try to build the application yet—it will fail.

Write the methods by using the Generate Method Stub Wizard

1. In the Code and Text Editor window, in the *run* method, right-click the *readDouble* method call.

A shortcut menu appears that contains useful commands for generating and editing code, as shown here:



2. On the shortcut menu, point to Generate, and then click Method Stub.

Visual Studio examines the call to the *readDouble* method, ascertains the type of its parameters and return value, and generates a method with a default implementation, like this:

```
private double readDouble(string p)
```

```
{  
    throw new NotImplementedException();  
}
```

The new method is created with the *private* qualifier, which is described in [Chapter 7](#). The body of the method currently just throws a *NotImplementedException* exception. (Exceptions are described in [Chapter 6](#).) You replace the body with your own code in the next step.

3. Delete the *throw new NotImplementedException();* statement from the *readDouble* method, and replace it with the following lines of code shown in bold:

```
private double readDouble(string p)  
{  
    Console.Write(p);  
    string line = Console.ReadLine();  
    return double.Parse(line);  
}
```

This block of code displays the string in variable *p* to the screen. This variable is the string parameter passed in when the method is called; it contains the message prompting the user to type in the daily rate.

#### NOTE

The *Console.Write* method is similar to the *Console.WriteLine* statement that you have used in earlier exercises, except that it does not output a newline character after the message.

The user types a value, which is read into a *string* using the *ReadLine* method and converted to a *double* using the *double.Parse* method. The result is passed back as the return value of the method call.

#### NOTE

The *ReadLine* method is the companion method to *WriteLine*; it reads user input from the keyboard, finishing when the user presses the Enter key. The text typed by the user is passed back as the return value. The text is returned as a string value.

- 
4. In the *run* method, right-click the call to the *readInt* method in the *run* method, point to Generate, and then click Method Stub to generate the *readInt* method.

The *readInt* method is generated, like this:

```
private int readInt(string p)
{
    throw new NotImplementedException();
}
```

5. Replace the *throw new NotImplementedException();* statement in the body of the *readInt* method with the following code shown in bold:

```
private int readInt(string p)
{
    Console.Write(p);
    string line = Console.ReadLine();
    return int.Parse(line);
}
```

This block of code is similar to the code for the *readDouble* method. The only difference is that the method returns an *int* value, so the *string* typed by the user is converted to a number using the *int.Parse* method.

6. Right-click the call to the *calculateFee* method in the *run* method, point to Generate, and then click Method Stub.

The *calculateFee* method is generated, like this:

```
private object calculateFee(double dailyRate, int noOfDays)
{
    throw new NotImplementedException();
}
```

Notice in this case that Visual Studio uses the names of the arguments passed in to generate names for the parameters. (You can, of course, change the parameter names if they are not suitable.) What is more intriguing is the type returned by the method, which is *object*. Visual



Studio is unable to determine exactly which type of value should be returned by the method from the context in which it is called. The *object* type just means a “thing,” and you should change it to the type you require when you add the code to the method. **Chapter 7** covers the *object* type in greater detail.

7. Change the definition of the *calculateFee* method so that it returns a *double*, as shown in bold type here:

```
private double calculateFee(double dailyRate, int noOfDays)
{
    throw new NotImplementedException();
}
```

8. Replace the body of the *calculateFee* method with the following statement shown in bold, which calculates the fee payable by multiplying the two parameters together and then returns it:

```
private double calculateFee(double dailyRate, int noOfDays)
{
    return dailyRate * noOfDays;
}
```

9. Right-click the call to the *writeFee* method in the *run* method, click Generate, and then click Method Stub.

Observe that Visual Studio uses the definition of the *calculateFee* method to work out that its parameter should be a *double*. Also, the method call does not use a return value, so the type of the method is *void*:

```
private void writeFee(double p)
{
    ...
}
```

#### TIP

If you feel sufficiently comfortable with the syntax, you can also write methods by typing them directly into the Code and Text Editor window. You do not always have to use the Generate menu option.

- 
10. Replace the code in the body of the *writeFee* method with the following statement, which calculates the fee and adds a 10 percent commission:

```
Console.WriteLine("The consultant's fee is: {0}", p * 1.1);
```

#### NOTE

This version of the *WriteLine* method demonstrates the use of a format string. The text *{0}* in the string used as the first argument to the *WriteLine* method is a placeholder that is replaced with the value of the expression following the string (*p \* 1.1*) when it is evaluated at run time. Using this technique is preferable to alternatives, such as converting the value of the expression *p \* 1.1* to a string and using the *+* operator to concatenate it to the message.

11. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

#### REFACTORING CODE

A very useful feature of Visual Studio 2013 is the ability to refactor code.

Occasionally, you will find yourself writing the same (or similar) code in more than one place in an application. When this occurs, highlight and right-click the block of code you have just typed and then, Refactor menu that appears, click Extract Method. The Extract Method dialog box opens, prompting you for the name of a new method to create containing this code. Type a name and click OK. The new method is created containing your code, and the code you typed is replaced with a call to this method. Extract Method is also able to determine whether the method should take any parameters and return a value.

#### Test the program

1. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Visual Studio 2013 builds the program and then runs it. A console window appears.

2. At the Enter Your Daily Rate prompt, type **525**, and then press Enter.
3. At the Enter the Number of Days prompt, type **17**, and then press Enter.

The program writes the following message to the console window:

The consultant's fee is: 9817.5

4. Press the Enter key to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.

In the next exercise, you'll use the Visual Studio 2013 debugger to run your program in slow motion. You'll see when each method is called (which is referred to as *stepping into the method*) and then see how each *return* statement transfers control back to the caller (also known as *stepping out of the method*). While you are stepping into and out of methods, you can use the tools on the Debug toolbar. However, the same commands are also available on the Debug menu when an application is running in debug mode.

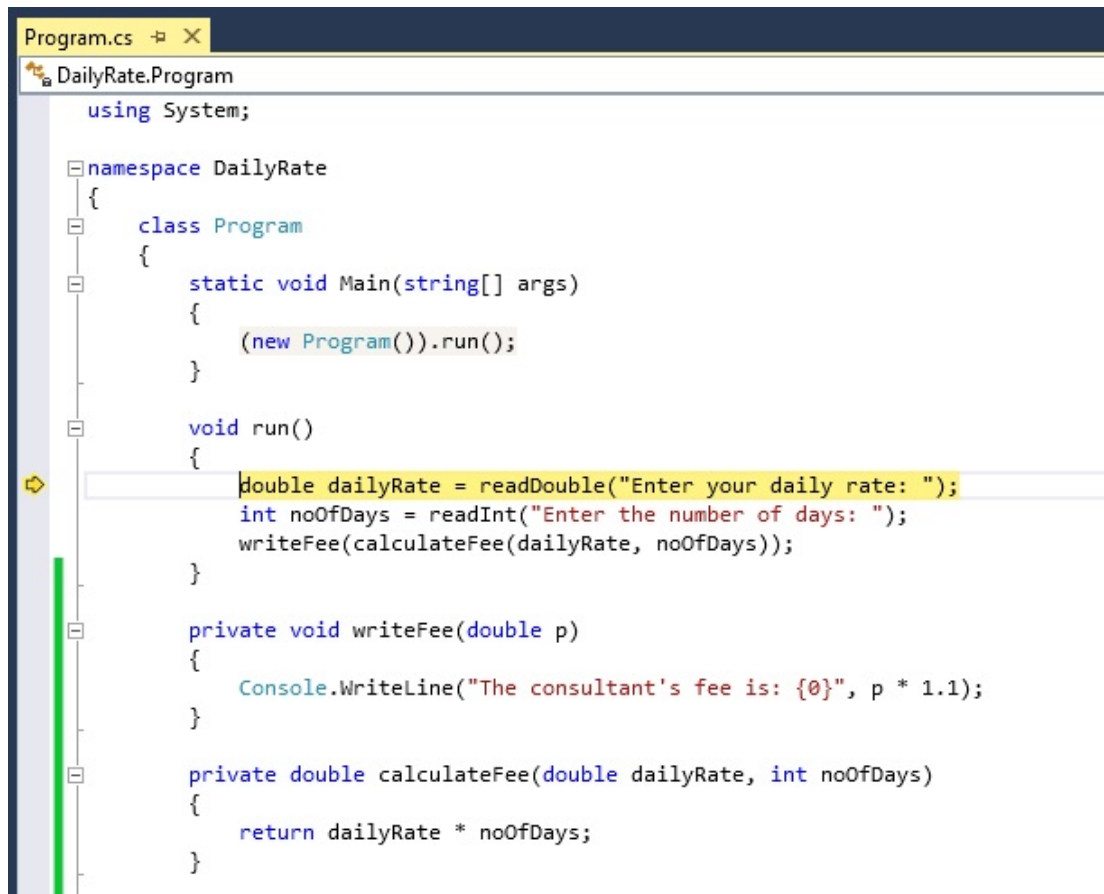
Step through the methods by using the Visual Studio 2013 debugger

1. In the Code and Text Editor window, find the *run* method.
2. Move the cursor to the first statement in the *run* method:

```
double dailyRate = readDouble('Enter your daily rate: ');
```

3. Right-click anywhere on this line and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click Run To Cursor.

The program starts and runs until it reaches the first statement in the *run* method, and then it pauses. A yellow arrow in the left margin of the Code and Text Editor window indicates the current statement, and the statement itself is highlighted with a yellow background.



```
Program.cs
DailyRate.Program
using System;

namespace DailyRate
{
    class Program
    {
        static void Main(string[] args)
        {
            (new Program()).run();
        }

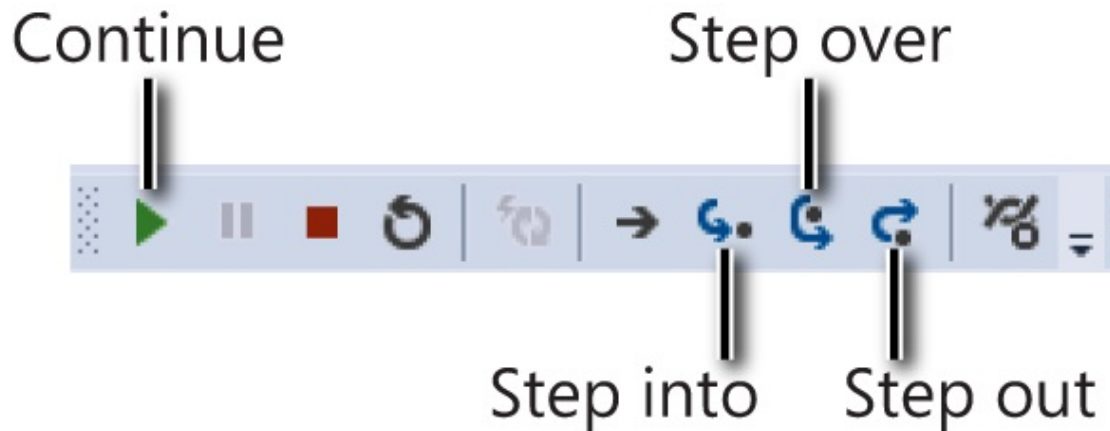
        void run()
        {
            double dailyRate = readDouble("Enter your daily rate: ");
            int noOfDays = readInt("Enter the number of days: ");
            writeFee(calculateFee(dailyRate, noOfDays));
        }

        private void writeFee(double p)
        {
            Console.WriteLine("The consultant's fee is: {0}", p * 1.1);
        }

        private double calculateFee(double dailyRate, int noOfDays)
        {
            return dailyRate * noOfDays;
        }
    }
}
```

4. On the View menu, point to Toolbars, and then ensure that the Debug toolbar is selected.

If it was not already visible, the Debug toolbar opens. It might appear docked with the other toolbars. If you cannot see the toolbar, try using the Toolbars command on the View menu to hide it, and look to see which buttons disappear. Then, display the toolbar again. The Debug toolbar looks like this:



5. On the Debug toolbar, click the Step Into button. (This is the seventh button from the left on the Debug toolbar.)

This action causes the debugger to step into the method being called. The yellow cursor jumps to the opening brace at the start of the *readDouble* method.

6. Click Step Into again to advance the cursor to the first statement:

```
Console.Write(p);
```

**TIP**

You can also press F11 rather than repeatedly clicking Step Into on the Debug toolbar.

7. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Over. (This is the eighth button from the left.)

This action causes the method to execute the next statement without debugging it (stepping into it). This action is primarily useful if the statement calls a method but you don't want to step through every statement in that method. The yellow cursor moves to the second statement of the method, and the program displays the Enter Your Daily Rate prompt in a console window before returning to Visual Studio 2013. (The console window might be hidden behind Visual Studio.)

#### TIP

You can also press F10 rather than clicking Step Over on the Debug toolbar.

8. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Over again.

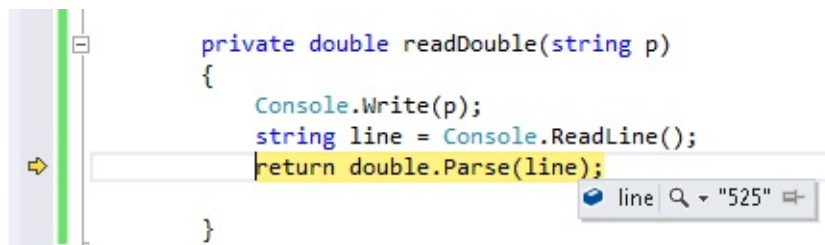
This time, the yellow cursor disappears and the console window gets the focus because the program is executing the *Console.ReadLine* method and is waiting for you to type something.

9. Type **525** in the console window, and then press Enter.

Control returns to Visual Studio 2013. The yellow cursor appears on the third line of the method.

10. Hover the mouse over the reference to the *line* variable on either the second or third line of the method. (It doesn't matter which.)

A ScreenTip appears, displaying the current value of the *line* variable ("525"). You can use this feature to ensure that a variable has been set to an expected value while stepping through methods.



11. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Out. (This is the ninth button from the left.)

This action causes the current method to continue running uninterrupted to its end. The *readDouble* method finishes, and the yellow cursor is placed back at the first statement of the *run* method. This statement is now finished running.

#### TIP

You can also press Shift+F11 rather than clicking Step Out on the Debug toolbar.

12. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Into.

The yellow cursor moves to the second statement in the *run* method:

```
int noOfDays = readInt("Enter the number of days: ");
```

13. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Over.

This time, you have chosen to run the method without stepping through it. The console window appears again, prompting you for the number of days.

14. In the console window, type **17**, and then press Enter.

Control returns to Visual Studio 2013 (you might need to bring Visual Studio to the foreground). The yellow cursor moves to the third statement of the *run* method:

```
writeFee(calculateFee(dailyRate, noOfDays));
```

15. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Into.

The yellow cursor jumps to the opening brace at the start of the *calculateFee* method. This method is called first, before *writeFee*, because the value returned by this method is used as the parameter to *writeFee*.

16. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Out.

The *calculateFee* method call completes, and the yellow cursor jumps back to the third statement of the *run* method.

17. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Into.

This time, the yellow cursor jumps to the opening brace at the start of the *writeFee* method.

18. Place the mouse over the *p* parameter in the method definition.

The value of *p*, 8925.0, displays in a ScreenTip.

19. On the Debug toolbar, click Step Out.

The message “The consultant’s fee is: 9817.5” displays in the console

window. (You might need to bring the console window to the foreground to display it if it is hidden behind Visual Studio 2013.) The yellow cursor returns to the third statement in the *run* method.

20. On the Debug menu, click Continue to cause the program to continue running without stopping at each statement.

#### TIP

If the Continue button is not visible, click the Add or Remove Buttons drop-down menu that appears at the end of the Debug toolbar, and then select Continue. The Continue button should now appear. Alternatively, you can press F5 to continue the application running without debugging.

The application completes and finishes running. Notice that the Debug toolbar disappears when the application finishes—by default, it displays only when you are running an application in debug mode.

## Using optional parameters and named arguments

You have seen that by defining overloaded methods, you can implement different versions of a method that take different parameters. When you build an application that uses overloaded methods, the compiler determines which specific instances of each method it should use to satisfy each method call. This is a common feature of many object-oriented languages, not just C#.

However, developers can use other languages and technologies for building Windows applications and components that do not follow these rules. A key feature of C# and other languages designed for the .NET Framework is the ability to interoperate with applications and components written by using other technologies. One of the principal technologies that underpins many Microsoft Windows applications and services running outside of the .NET Framework is the Component Object Model (COM). In fact, the Common Language Runtime (CLR) used by the .NET Framework is also heavily dependent on COM, as is the Windows Runtime of Windows 8 and Windows 8.1. COM does not support overloaded methods; instead, it uses methods that can take optional parameters



overloaded methods, instead, it uses methods that can take optional parameters. To make it easier to incorporate COM libraries and components into a C# solution, C# also supports optional parameters.

Optional parameters are also useful in other situations. They provide a compact and simple solution when it is not possible to use overloading because the types of the parameters do not vary sufficiently to enable the compiler to distinguish between implementations. For example, consider the following method:

```
public void DoWorkWithData(int intData, float floatData, int moreIntData)
{
    ...
}
```

The *DoWorkWithData* method takes three parameters: two *ints* and a *float*. Now, suppose that you want to provide an implementation of *DoWorkWithData* that took only two parameters: *intData* and *floatData*. You can overload the method like this:

```
public void DoWorkWithData(int intData, float floatData)
{
    ...
}
```

If you write a statement that calls the *DoWorkWithData* method, you can provide either two or three parameters of the appropriate types, and the compiler uses the type information to determine which overload to call:

```
int arg1 = 99;
float arg2 = 100.0F;
int arg3 = 101;
DoWorkWithData(arg1, arg2, arg3); // Call overload with three parameters
DoWorkWithData(arg1, arg2);       // Call overload with two parameters
```

However, suppose that you want to implement two further versions of *DoWorkWithData* that take only the first parameter and the third parameter. You might be tempted to try this:

```
public void DoWorkWithData(int intData)
{
    ...
}
```

```

}
public void DoWorkWithData(int moreIntData)
{
    ...
}

```

The issue here is that to the compiler, these two overloads appear identical. Your code will fail to compile and will instead generate the error “Type ‘*typename*’ already defines a member called ‘DoWorkWithData’ with the same parameter types.” To understand why this is so, if this code were legal, consider the following statements:

```

int arg1 = 99;
int arg3 = 101;
DoWorkWithData(arg1);
DoWorkWithData(arg3);

```

Which overload or overloads would the calls to *DoWorkWithData* invoke? Using optional parameters and named arguments can help to solve this problem.

## Defining optional parameters

You specify that a parameter is optional when you define a method by providing a default value for the parameter. You indicate a default value by using the assignment operator. In the *optMethod* method shown next, the *first* parameter is mandatory because it does not specify a default value, but the *second* and *third* parameters are optional:

```

void optMethod(int first, double second = 0.0, string third = "Hello")
{
    ...
}

```

You must specify all mandatory parameters before any optional parameters.

You can call a method that takes optional parameters in the same way that you call any other method: you specify the method name and provide any necessary arguments. The difference with methods that take optional parameters is that you can omit the corresponding arguments, and the method will use the default value when it runs. In the example code that follows, the first call to the *optMethod*

method provides values for all three parameters. The second call specifies only two arguments, and these values are applied to the *first* and *second* parameters. The *third* parameter receives the default value of “Hello” when the method runs.

```
optMethod(99, 123.45, "World"); // Arguments provided for all three parameters
optMethod(100, 54.321);         // Arguments provided for first two parameters only
```

## Passing named arguments

By default, C# uses the position of each argument in a method call to determine to which parameters they apply. Hence, the second example method shown in the previous section passes the two arguments to the *first* and *second* parameters in the *optMethod* method because this is the order in which they occur in the method declaration. With C#, you can also specify parameters by name. This feature lets you pass the arguments in a different sequence. To pass an argument as a named parameter, you specify the name of the parameter, followed by a colon and the value to use. The following examples perform the same function as those shown in the previous section, except that the parameters are specified by name:

```
optMethod(first : 99, second : 123.45, third : 'World');
optMethod(first : 100, second : 54.321);
```

Named arguments give you the ability to pass arguments in any order. You can rewrite the code that calls the *optMethod* method, such as shown here:

```
optMethod(third : "World", second : 123.45, first : 99);
optMethod(second : 54.321, first : 100);
```

This feature also makes it possible for you to omit arguments. For example, you can call the *optMethod* method and specify values for the *first* and *third* parameters only and use the default value for the *second* parameter, like this:

```
optMethod(first : 99, third : "World");
```

Additionally, you can mix positional and named arguments. However, if you use this technique, you must specify all the positional arguments before the first named argument.

```
optMethod(99, third : "World"); // First argument is positional
```

## Resolving ambiguities with optional parameters and named arguments

Using optional parameters and named arguments can result in some possible ambiguities in your code. You need to understand how the compiler resolves these ambiguities; otherwise, you might find your applications behaving in unexpected ways. Suppose that you define the *optMethod* method as an overloaded method, as shown in the following example:

```
void optMethod(int first, double second = 0.0, string third = "Hello")
{
    ...
}
void optMethod(int first, double second = 1.0, string third = "Goodbye", int fourth
= 100 )
{
    ...
}
```

This is perfectly legal C# code that follows the rules for overloaded methods. The compiler can distinguish between the methods because they have different parameter lists. However, as demonstrated in the following example, a problem can arise if you attempt to call the *optMethod* method and omit some of the arguments corresponding to one or more of the optional parameters:

```
optMethod(1, 2.5, "World");
```

Again, this is perfectly legal code, but which version of the *optMethod* method does it run? The answer is that it runs the version that most closely matches the method call, so it invokes the method that takes three parameters and not the version that takes four. That makes good sense, so consider this one:

```
optMethod(1, fourth : 101);
```

In this code, the call to *optMethod* omits arguments for the *second* and *third* parameters, but it specifies the *fourth* parameter by name. Only one version of *optMethod* matches this call, so this is not a problem. This next one will get you

thinking, though:

```
optMethod(1, 2.5);
```

This time, neither version of the *optMethod* method exactly matches the list of arguments provided. Both versions of the *optMethod* method have optional parameters for the second, third, and fourth arguments. So, does this statement call the version of *optMethod* that takes three parameters and use the default value for the *third* parameter, or does it call the version of *optMethod* that takes four parameters and use the default value for the *third* and *fourth* parameters? The answer is that it does neither. This is an unresolvable ambiguity, and the compiler does not let you compile the application. The same situation arises with the same result if you try to call the *optMethod* method as shown in any of the following statements:

```
optMethod(1, third : "World");  
optMethod(1);  
optMethod(second : 2.5, first : 1);
```

In the final exercise in this chapter, you will practice implementing methods that take optional parameters and calling them by using named arguments. You will also test common examples of how the C# compiler resolves method calls that involve optional parameters and named arguments.

Define and call a method that takes optional parameters

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, open the DailyRate project, which is in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 3\Windows X\DailyRate Using Optional Parameters folder in your Documents folder.
2. In Solution Explorer, in the DailyRate project, double-click the file Program.cs to display the code for the program in the Code and Text Editor window.

This version of the application is empty apart from the *Main* method and the skeleton version of the *run* method.

3. In the *Program* class, add the *calculateFee* method below the *run* method. This is the same version of the method that you implemented in the

previous set of exercises, except that it takes two optional parameters with default values. The method also prints a message indicating the version of the *calculateFee* method that was called. (You add overloaded implementations of this method in the following steps.)

```
private double calculateFee(double dailyRate = 500.0, int noOfDays = 1)
{
    Console.WriteLine("calculateFee using two optional parameters");
    return dailyRate * noOfDays;
}
```

4. Add another implementation of the *calculateFee* method to the *Program* class, as shown next. This version takes one optional parameter, called *dailyRate*, of type *double*. The body of the method calculates and returns the fee for a single day only.

```
private double calculateFee(double dailyRate = 500.0)
{
    Console.WriteLine("calculateFee using one optional parameter");
    int defaultNoOfDays = 1;
    return dailyRate * defaultNoOfDays;
}
```

5. Add a third implementation of the *calculateFee* method to the *Program* class. This version takes no parameters and uses hardcoded values for the daily rate and number of days.

```
private double calculateFee()
{
    Console.WriteLine("calculateFee using hardcoded values");
    double defaultDailyRate = 400.0;
    int defaultNoOfDays = 1;
    return defaultDailyRate * defaultNoOfDays;
}
```

6. In the *run* method, add the following statements in bold that call *calculateFee* and display the results:

```
public void run()
{
    double fee = calculateFee();
```

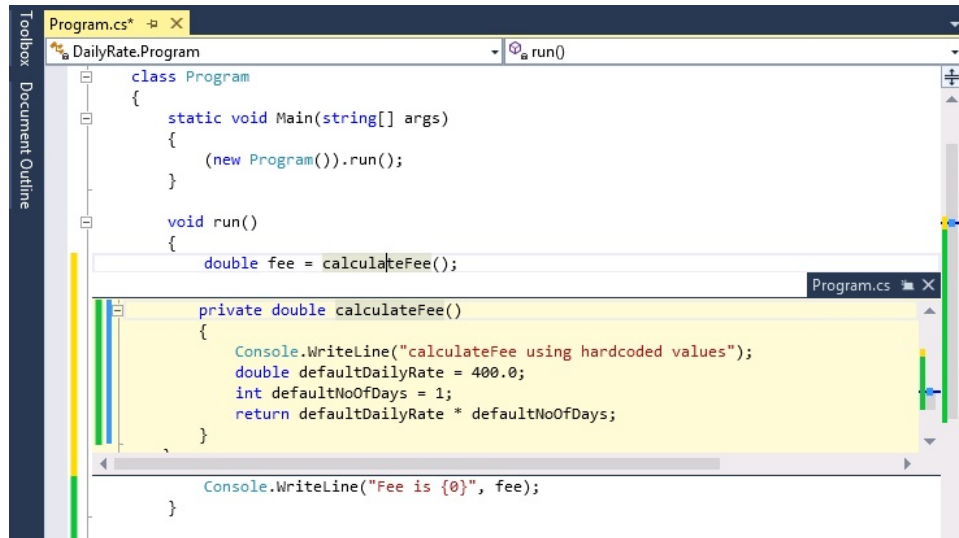
```

    Console.WriteLine("Fee is {0}", fee);
}

```

### TIP

You can quickly view the definition of a method from the statement that invokes it. To do so, right-click the method call and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click Peek Definition. The following image shows the Peek Definition window for the *calculateFee* method.



This feature is extremely useful if your code is split across multiple files, or even if it is in the same file but the file is very long.

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.

The program runs in a console window and displays the following messages:

```

calculateFee using hardcoded values
Fee is 400

```

The *run* method called the version of *calculateFee* that takes no parameters rather than either of the implementations that take optional parameters because it is the version that most closely matches the method call.

Press any key to close the console window and return to Visual Studio.

8. In the *run* method, modify the statement that calls *calculateFee* to match the code shown in bold in this sample:

```
public void run()
{
    double fee = calculateFee(650.0);
    Console.WriteLine("Fee is {0}", fee);
}
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.

The program displays the following messages:

```
calculateFee using one optional parameter
Fee is 650
```

This time, the *run* method called the version of *calculateFee* that takes one optional parameter. As before, this is because this is the version that most closely matches the method call.

Press any key to close the console window and return to Visual Studio.

10. In the *run* method, modify the statement that calls *calculateFee* again:

```
public void run()
{
    double fee = calculateFee(500.0, 3);
    Console.WriteLine("Fee is {0}", fee);
}
```

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.

The program displays the following messages:

```
calculateFee using two optional parameters
Fee is 1500
```

As you might expect from the previous two cases, the *run* method called the version of *calculateFee* that takes two optional parameters.



Press any key to close the console window and return to Visual Studio.

12. In the *run* method, modify the statement that calls *calculateFee* and specify the *dailyRate* parameter by name:

```
public void run()
{
    double fee = calculateFee(dailyRate : 375.0);
    Console.WriteLine("Fee is {0}", fee);
}
```

13. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.

The program displays the following messages:

```
calculateFee using one optional parameter
Fee is 375
```

As earlier, the *run* method calls the version of *calculateFee* that takes one optional parameter. Changing the code to use a named argument does not change the way in which the compiler resolves the method call in this example.

Press any key to close the console window and return to Visual Studio.

14. In the *run* method, modify the statement that calls *calculateFee* and specify the *noOfDays* parameter by name.

```
public void run()
{
    double fee = calculateFee(noOfDays : 4);
    Console.WriteLine("Fee is {0}", fee);
}
```

15. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.

The program displays the following messages:

```
calculateFee using two optional parameters
Fee is 2000
```

This time, the *run* method called the version of *calculateFee* that takes two optional parameters. The method call has omitted the first parameter (*dailyRate*) and specified the second parameter by name. This version of the *calculateFee* method that takes two optional parameters is the only one that matches the call.

Press any key to close the console window and return to Visual Studio.

16. Modify the implementation of the *calculateFee* method that takes two optional parameters. Change the name of the first parameter to *theDailyRate* and update the *return* statement to match that shown in bold type in the following code:

```
private double calculateFee(double theDailyRate = 500.0, int noOfDays = 1)
{
    Console.WriteLine("calculateFee using two optional parameters");
    return theDailyRate * noOfDays;
}
```

17. In the *run* method, modify the statement that calls *calculateFee* and specify the *theDailyRate* parameter by name.

```
public void run()
{
    double fee = calculateFee(theDailyRate : 375.0);
    Console.WriteLine("Fee is {0}", fee);
}
```

18. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.

The program displays the following messages:

```
calculateFee using two optional parameters
Fee is 375
```

The previous time that you specified the fee but not the daily rate (step 13), the *run* method called the version of *calculateFee* that takes one optional parameter. This time, the *run* method called the version of *calculateFee* that takes two optional parameters. In this case, using a named argument

has changed the way in which the compiler resolves the method call. If you specify a named argument, the compiler compares the argument name to the names of the parameters specified in the method declarations and selects the method that has a parameter with a matching name. If you had specified the argument as `aDailyRate: 375.0` in the call to the `calculateFee` method, the program would have failed to compile because no version of the method has a parameter that matches this name.

Press any key to close the console window and return to Visual Studio.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to define methods to implement a named block of code. You saw how to pass parameters into methods and how to return data from methods. You also saw how to call a method, pass arguments, and obtain a return value. You learned how to define overloaded methods with different parameter lists, and you saw how the scope of a variable determines where it can be accessed. Then, you used the Visual Studio 2013 debugger to step through code as it runs. Finally, you learned how to write methods that take optional parameters and how to call methods by using named parameters.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 4](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, On the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Declare a method	<p>Write the method within a class. Specify the method name, parameter list, and return type, followed by the body of the method between braces. For example:</p> <pre>int addValues(int leftHandSide, int rightHandSide) {</pre>

	<pre>         ...     } </pre>
Return a value from within a method	<p>Write a return statement within the method. For example:</p> <pre>         return leftHandSide + rightHandSide; </pre>
Return from a method before the end of the method	<p>Write a return statement within the method. For example:</p> <pre>         return; </pre>
Call a method	<p>Write the name of the method together with any arguments between parentheses. For example:</p> <pre>         addValues(39, 3); </pre>
Use the Generate Method Stub Wizard	<p>Right-click a call to the method and then, on the shortcut menu, click Generate Method Stub.</p>
Display the Debug toolbar	<p>On the View menu, point to Toolbars, and then click Debug.</p>
Step into a method	<p>On the Debug toolbar, click Step Into.</p> <p>or</p> <p>On the Debug menu, click Step Into.</p>
Step out of a method	<p>On the Debug toolbar, click Step Out.</p> <p>or</p> <p>On the Debug menu, click Step Out.</p>
Specify an optional parameter to a method	<p>Provide a default value for the parameter in the method declaration. For example:</p> <pre>         void optMethod(int first, double second = 0.0,                         string third = "Hello")         {             ...         } </pre>
Pass a method	<p>Specify the name of the parameter in the method call. For example:</p>

argument as a named  
parameter

```
optMethod(first : 100, third : "World");
```

# Chapter 4. Using decision statements

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Declaring Boolean variables
- Using Boolean operators
- Using *if* statements to make decisions
- Using *switch* statements

Chapter 3 shows how to group related statements into methods. It also demonstrates how to use parameters to pass information to a method and how to use *return* statements to pass information out of a method. Dividing a program into a set of discrete methods, each designed to perform a specific task or calculation, is a necessary design strategy. Many programs need to solve large and complex problems. Breaking up a program into methods helps you to understand these problems and focus on how to solve them, one piece at a time.

The methods in Chapter 3 are very straightforward, with each statement executing sequentially after the previous statement completed. However, to solve many real-world problems, you also need to be able to write code that selectively performs different actions and that takes different paths through a method, depending on the circumstances. In this chapter, you'll learn how to accomplish this task.

## Declaring Boolean variables

In the world of C# programming (unlike in the real world), everything is black or white, right or wrong, true or false. For example, if you create an integer variable called *x*, assign the value 99 to it, and then ask whether *x* contains the

value 99, the answer is definitely true. If you ask if  $x$  is less than 10, the answer is definitely false. These are examples of *Boolean expressions*. A Boolean expression always evaluates to true or false.

#### NOTE

The answers to these questions are not necessarily definitive for all other programming languages. An unassigned variable has an undefined value, and you cannot, for example, say that it is definitely less than 10. Issues such as this one are a common source of errors in C and C++ programs. The Microsoft Visual C# compiler solves this problem by ensuring that you always assign a value to a variable before examining it. If you try to examine the contents of an unassigned variable, your program will not compile.

Visual C# provides a data type called *bool*. A *bool* variable can hold one of two values: *true* or *false*. For example, the following three statements declare a *bool* variable called *areYouReady*, assign *true* to that variable, and then write its value to the console:

```
bool areYouReady;  
areYouReady = true;  
Console.WriteLine(areYouReady); // writes True to the console
```

## Using Boolean operators

A Boolean operator is an operator that performs a calculation whose result is either true or false. C# has several very useful Boolean operators, the simplest of which is the *NOT* operator, represented by the exclamation point (!). The ! operator negates a Boolean value, yielding the opposite of that value. In the preceding example, if the value of the variable *areYouReady* is true, the value of the expression *!areYouReady* is false.

## Understanding equality and relational operators

Two Boolean operators that you will frequently use are equality (==) and inequality (!=). These are binary operators with which you can determine whether one value is the same as another value of the same type, yielding a Boolean result. The following table summarizes how these operators work, using

an *int* variable called *age* as an example.

Operator	Meaning	Example	Outcome if age is 42
==	Equal to	age == 100	false
!=	Not equal to	age != 0	true

Don't confuse the *equality* operator == with the *assignment* operator =. The expression *x*==*y* compares *x* with *y* and has the value *true* if the values are the same. The expression *x*=*y* assigns the value of *y* to *x* and returns the value of *y* as its result.

Closely related to == and != are the *relational* operators. You use these operators to find out whether a value is less than or greater than another value of the same type. The following table shows how to use these operators.

Operator	Meaning	Example	Outcome if age is 42
<	Less than	age < 21	false
<=	Less than or equal to	age <= 18	false
>	Greater than	age > 16	true
>=	Greater than or equal to	age >= 30	true

## Understanding conditional logical operators

C# also provides two other binary Boolean operators: the logical AND operator, which is represented by the && symbol, and the logical OR operator, which is represented by the || symbol. Collectively, these are known as the conditional logical operators. Their purpose is to combine two Boolean expressions or values into a single Boolean result. These operators are similar to the equality and relational operators in that the value of the expressions in which they appear is either true or false, but they differ in that the values on which they operate must also be either true or false.

The outcome of the && operator is *true* if and only if both of the Boolean expressions it's evaluating are *true*. For example, the following statement



assigns the value *true* to *validPercentage* if and only if the value of *percent* is greater than or equal to 0 and the value of *percent* is less than or equal to 100:

```
bool validPercentage;  
validPercentage = (percent >= 0) && (percent <= 100);
```

#### TIP

A common beginner's error is to try to combine the two tests by naming the *percent* variable only once, like this:

```
percent >= 0 && <= 100 // this statement will not compile
```

Using parentheses helps to avoid this type of mistake and also clarifies the purpose of the expression. For example, compare

```
validPercentage = percent >= 0 && percent <= 100
```

and:

```
validPercentage = (percent >= 0) && (percent <= 100)
```

Both expressions return the same value because the precedence of the && operator is less than that of >= and <=. However, the second expression conveys its purpose in a more readable manner.

The outcome of the || operator is *true* if either of the Boolean expressions it evaluates is *true*. You use the || operator to determine whether any one of a combination of Boolean expressions is *true*. For example, the following statement assigns the value *true* to *invalidPercentage* if the value of *percent* is less than 0 or the value of *percent* is greater than 100:

```
bool invalidPercentage;  
invalidPercentage = (percent < 0) || (percent > 100);
```

## Short-circuiting

The && and || operators both exhibit a feature called *short-circuiting*. Sometimes, it is not necessary to evaluate both operands when ascertaining the result of a conditional logical expression. For example, if the left operand of the && operator evaluates to *false*, the result of the entire expression must be *false*,

regardless of the value of the right operand. Similarly, if the value of the left operand of the `||` operator evaluates to *true*, the result of the entire expression must be *true*, irrespective of the value of the right operand. In these cases, the `&&` and `||` operators bypass the evaluation of the right operand. Here are some examples:

```
(percent >= 0) && (percent <= 100)
```

In this expression, if the value of *percent* is less than 0, the Boolean expression on the left side of `&&` evaluates to *false*. This value means that the result of the entire expression must be *false*, and the Boolean expression to the right of the `&&` operator is not evaluated.

```
(percent < 0) || (percent > 100)
```

In this expression, if the value of *percent* is less than 0, the Boolean expression on the left side of `||` evaluates to *true*. This value means that the result of the entire expression must be *true* and the Boolean expression to the right of the `||` operator is not evaluated.

If you carefully design expressions that use the conditional logical operators, you can boost the performance of your code by avoiding unnecessary work. Place simple Boolean expressions that can be evaluated easily on the left side of a conditional logical operator, and put more complex expressions on the right side. In many cases, you will find that the program does not need to evaluate the more complex expressions.

## Summarizing operator precedence and associativity

The following table summarizes the precedence and associativity of all the operators you have learned about so far. Operators in the same category have the same precedence. The operators in categories higher up in the table take precedence over operators in categories lower down.

Category	Operators	Description	Associativity
Primary	()	Precedence override	Left
	++	Post-increment	

	--	Post-decrement	
Unary	!  +  -  ++  --	Logical NOT  Returns the value of the operand unchanged  Returns the value of the operand negated  Pre-increment  Pre-decrement	Left
Multiplicative	*  /  %	Multiply  Divide  Division remainder (modulus)	Left
Additive	+  -	Addition  Subtraction	Left
Relational	<	Less than	Left
	<=	Less than or equal to	
	>	Greater than	
	>=	Greater than or equal to	
Equality	==	Equal to	Left
	!=	Not equal to	
Conditional AND	&&	Conditional AND	Left
Conditional OR		Conditional OR	Left
Assignment	=	Assigns the right-hand operand to the left and returns the value that was assigned	Right

Notice that the && operator and the || operator have a different precedence: &&

is higher than `||`.

## Using *if* statements to make decisions

In a method, when you want to choose between executing two different statements depending on the result of a Boolean expression, you can use an *if* statement.

### Understanding *if* statement syntax

The syntax of an *if* statement is as follows (*if* and *else* are C# keywords):

```
if ( booleanExpression )
    statement-1;
else
    statement-2;
```

If *booleanExpression* evaluates to *true*, *statement-1* runs; otherwise, *statement-2* runs. The *else* keyword and the subsequent *statement-2* are optional. If there is no *else* clause and the *booleanExpression* is *false*, execution continues with whatever code follows the *if* statement. Also, notice that the Boolean expression must be enclosed in parentheses; otherwise, the code will not compile.

For example, here's an *if* statement that increments a variable representing the second hand of a stopwatch. (Minutes are ignored for now.) If the value of the *seconds* variable is 59, it is reset to 0; otherwise, it is incremented by using the `++` operator:

```
int seconds;
...
if (seconds == 59)
    seconds = 0;
else
    seconds++;
```

#### BOOLEAN EXPRESSIONS ONLY, PLEASE!

The expression in an *if* statement must be enclosed in parentheses. Additionally, the expression must be a Boolean expression. In some other languages—notably C and C++—you can write an integer expression, and the compiler will silently convert the integer value to *true* (nonzero) or *false* (0). C#

does not support this behavior, and the compiler reports an error if you write such an expression.

If you accidentally specify the assignment operator (=) instead of the equality test operator (==) in an *if* statement, the C# compiler recognizes your mistake and refuses to compile your code, such as in the following example:

```
int seconds;
...
if (seconds = 59) // compile-time error
...
if (seconds == 59) // ok
```

Accidental assignments were another common source of bugs in C and C++ programs, which would silently convert the value assigned (59) to a Boolean expression (with anything nonzero considered to be true), with the result being that the code following the *if* statement would be performed every time.

Incidentally, you can use a Boolean variable as the expression for an *if* statement, although it must still be enclosed in parentheses, as shown in this example:

```
bool inWord;
...
if (inWord == true) // ok, but not commonly used
...
if (inWord)         // more common and considered better style
```

## Using blocks to group statements

Notice that the syntax of the *if* statement shown earlier specifies a single statement after the *if* (*booleanExpression*) and a single statement after the *else* keyword. Sometimes, you'll want to perform more than one statement when a Boolean expression is true. You could group the statements inside a new method and then call the new method, but a simpler solution is to group the statements inside a *block*. A block is simply a sequence of statements grouped between an opening brace and a closing brace.

In the following example, two statements that reset the *seconds* variable to 0 and increment the *minutes* variable are grouped inside a block, and the entire block executes if the value of *seconds* is equal to 59:

```
int seconds = 0;
int minutes = 0;
...
if (seconds == 59)
```

```

if (seconds == 59)
{
    seconds = 0;
    minutes++;
}
else
{
    seconds++;
}

```

### IMPORTANT

If you omit the braces, the C# compiler associates only the first statement (*seconds = 0;*) with the *if* statement. The subsequent statement (*minutes++;*) will not be recognized by the compiler as part of the *if* statement when the program is compiled. Furthermore, when the compiler reaches the *else* keyword, it will not associate it with the previous *if* statement; instead, it will report a syntax error. Therefore, it is good practice to always define the statements for each branch of an *if* statement within a block, even if a block consists of only a single statement. It might save you some grief later if you want to add additional code.

A block also starts a new scope. You can define variables inside a block, but they will disappear at the end of the block. The following code fragment illustrates this point:

```

if (...)
{
    int myVar = 0;
    // myVar can be used here
    ...
} // myVar disappears here
else
{
    // myVar cannot be used here
    ...
}
// myVar cannot be used here

```

## Cascading *if* statements

You can nest *if* statements inside other *if* statements. In this way, you can chain together a sequence of Boolean expressions, which are tested one after the other until one of them evaluates to *true*. In the following example, if the value of *day*

is 0, the first test evaluates to *true* and *dayName* is assigned the string “*Sunday*”. If the value of *day* is not 0, the first test fails and control passes to the *else* clause, which runs the second *if* statement and compares the value of *day* with 1. The second *if* statement executes only if the first test is *false*. Similarly, the third *if* statement executes only if the first and second tests are *false*.

```
if (day == 0)
{
    dayName = "Sunday";
}
else if (day == 1)
{
    dayName = "Monday";
}
else if (day == 2)
{
    dayName = "Tuesday";
}
else if (day == 3)
{
    dayName = "Wednesday";
}
else if (day == 4)
{
    dayName = "Thursday";
}
else if (day == 5)
{
    dayName = "Friday";
}
else if (day == 6)
{
    dayName = "Saturday";
}
else
{
    dayName = "unknown";
}
```

In the following exercise, you’ll write a method that uses a cascading *if* statement to compare two dates.

Write *if* statements

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.

2. Open the Selection project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 4\Windows X\Selection folder in your Documents folder.

3. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

Visual Studio 2013 builds and runs the application. The form displays two *DatePicker* controls, called *firstDate* and *secondDate*. If you are running Windows 8.1, both controls display the current date.

4. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, click the calendar icon in the first *DatePicker* control, and then click the current date. Repeat this operation for the second *DatePicker* control.

5. Click Compare.

The following text appears in the text box in the lower half of the window:

```
firstDate == secondDate : False
firstDate != secondDate : True
firstDate < secondDate : False
firstDate <= secondDate : False
firstDate > secondDate : True
firstDate >= secondDate : True
```

The Boolean expression, *firstDate* == *secondDate*, should be *true* because both *firstDate* and *secondDate* are set to the current date. In fact, only the less-than operator and the greater-than-or-equal-to operator seem to be working correctly. The following images show the Windows 8.1 and Windows 7 versions of the application running.

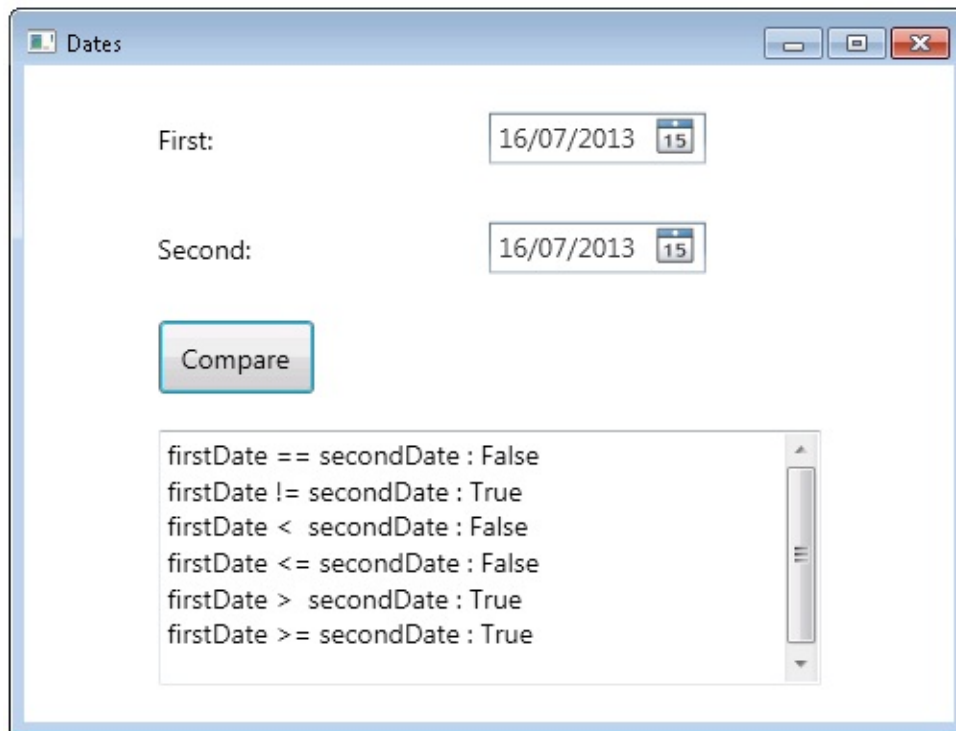


First: 16 ▾ May ▾ 2013 ▾

Second: 16 ▾ July ▾ 2013 ▾

Compare

```
firstDate == secondDate : False  
firstDate != secondDate : True  
firstDate < secondDate : False  
firstDate <= secondDate : False  
firstDate > secondDate : True  
firstDate >= secondDate : True
```



6. Return to Visual Studio 2013. On the Debug menu click Stop Debugging (or simply close the application if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8).

7. Display the code for the `MainWindow.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window.
8. Locate the *compareClick* method, which should look like this:

```
private void compareClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    int diff = dateCompare(first, second);
    info.Text = "";
    show("firstDate == secondDate", diff == 0);
    show("firstDate != secondDate", diff != 0);
    show("firstDate < secondDate", diff < 0);
    show("firstDate <= secondDate", diff <= 0);
    show("firstDate > secondDate", diff > 0);
    show("firstDate >= secondDate", diff >= 0);
}
```

This method runs whenever the user clicks the Compare button on the form. The variables *first* and *second* hold *DateTime* values; they are populated with the dates displayed in the *firstDate* and *secondDate* controls on the form elsewhere in the application. The *DateTime* data type is just another data type, like *int* or *float*, except that it contains subelements with which you can access the individual pieces of a date, such as the year, month, or day.

The *compareClick* method passes the two *DateTime* values to the *dateCompare* method. The purpose of this method is to compare dates and return the *int* value 0 if they are the same, -1 if the first date is less than the second, and +1 if the first date is greater than the second. A date is considered greater than another date if it comes after it chronologically. You will examine the *dateCompare* method in the next step.

The *show* method displays the results of the comparison in the *info* text box control in the lower half of the form.

9. Locate the *dateCompare* method, which should look like this:

```
private int dateCompare(DateTime leftHandSide, DateTime rightHandSide)
{
    // TO DO
    return 42;
}
```

}

This method currently returns the same value whenever it is called—rather than 0, -1, or +1—regardless of the values of its parameters. This explains why the application is not working as expected. You need to implement the logic in this method to compare two dates correctly.

10. Remove the *// TO DO* comment and the *return* statement from the *dateCompare* method.
11. Add the following statements shown in bold type to the body of the *dateCompare* method:

```
private int dateCompare(DateTime leftHandSide, DateTime rightHandSide)
{
    int result;
    if (leftHandSide.Year < rightHandSide.Year)
    {
        result = -1;
    }
    else if (leftHandSide.Year > rightHandSide.Year)
    {
        result = 1;
    }
}
```

If the expression *leftHandSide.Year < rightHandSide.Year* is *true*, the date in *leftHandSide* must be earlier than the date in *rightHandSide*, so the program sets the *result* variable to -1. Otherwise, if the expression *leftHandSide.Year > rightHandSide.Year* is *true*, the date in *leftHandSide* must be later than the date in *rightHandSide*, and the program sets the *result* variable to 1.

If the expression *leftHandSide.Year < rightHandSide.Year* is *false* and the expression *leftHandSide.Year > rightHandSide.Year* is also *false*, the *Year* property of both dates must be the same, so the program needs to compare the months in each date.

12. Add the following statements shown in bold type to the body of the *dateCompare* method, following the code you entered in the preceding

step:

```
private int dateCompare(DateTime leftHandSide, DateTime rightHandSide)
{
    ...
    else if (leftHandSide.Month < rightHandSide.Month)
    {
        result = -1;
    }
    else if (leftHandSide.Month > rightHandSide.Month)
    {
        result = 1;
    }
}
```

These statements follow a similar logic for comparing months to that used to compare years in the preceding step.

If the expression *leftHandSide.Month < rightHandSide.Month* is *false* and the expression *leftHandSide.Month > rightHandSide.Month* is also *false*, the *Month* property of both dates must be the same, so the program finally needs to compare the days in each date.

13. Add the following statements to the body of the *dateCompare* method, after the code you entered in the preceding two steps:

```
private int dateCompare(DateTime leftHandSide, DateTime rightHandSide)
{
    ...
    else if (leftHandSide.Day < rightHandSide.Day)
    {
        result = -1;
    }
    else if (leftHandSide.Day > rightHandSide.Day)
    {
        result = 1;
    }
    else
    {
        result = 0;
    }
    return result;
}
```

You should recognize the pattern in this logic by now.

If *leftHandSide.Day* < *rightHandSide.Day* and *leftHandSide.Day* > *rightHandSide.Day* both are *false*, the value in the *Day* properties in both variables must be the same. The *Month* values and the *Year* values must also be identical, respectively, for the program logic to have reached this far, so the two dates must be the same, and the program sets the value of *result* to 0.

The final statement returns the value stored in the *result* variable.

14. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

The application is rebuilt and restarted. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, set both *DatePicker* controls to the current date.

15. Click Compare.

The following text appears in the text box:

```
firstDate == secondDate : True
firstDate != secondDate : False
firstDate <  secondDate: False
firstDate <= secondDate: True
firstDate >  secondDate: False
firstDate >= secondDate: True
```

These are the correct results for identical dates.

16. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, select a later month for the *secondDate DatePicker* control. If you are using Windows 8.1, use the drop-down arrows to select a later date.
17. Click Compare.

The following text appears in the text box:

```
firstDate == secondDate: False
firstDate != secondDate: True
firstDate <  secondDate: True
firstDate <= secondDate: True
firstDate >  secondDate: False
firstDate >= secondDate: False
```

Again, these are the correct results when the first date is earlier than the second date.

18. Test some other dates, and verify that the results are as you would expect. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging (or close the application if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8) when you have finished.

### COMPARING DATES IN REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS

Now that you have seen how to use a rather long and complicated series of *if* and *else* statements, I should mention that this is not the technique you would employ to compare dates in a real-world application. If you look at the *dateCompare* method from the preceding exercise, you will see that the two parameters, *leftHandSide* and *rightHandSide*, are *DateTime* values. The logic you have written compares only the date part of these parameters, but they also contain a time element that you have not considered (or displayed). For two *DateTime* values to be considered equal, they should have not only the same date but also the same time. Comparing dates and times is such a common operation that the *DateTime* type actually has a built-in method called *Compare* for doing just that: it takes two *DateTime* arguments and compares them, returning a value indicating whether the first argument is less than the second, in which case the result will be negative; whether the first argument is greater than the second, in which case the result will be positive; or whether both arguments represent the same date and time, in which case the result will be 0.

## Using *switch* statements

Sometimes, when you write a cascading *if* statement, each of the *if* statements look similar because they all evaluate an identical expression. The only difference is that each *if* compares the result of the expression with a different value. For example, consider the following block of code that uses an *if* statement to examine the value in the *day* variable and work out which day of the week it is:

```
if (day == 0)
{
    dayName = "Sunday";
}
else if (day == 1)
{
    dayName = "Monday";
}
else if (day == 2)
{
```

```

        dayName = "Tuesday";
    }
    else if (day == 3)
    {
        ...
    }
    else
    {
        dayName = "Unknown";
    }

```

In these situations, often you can rewrite the cascading *if* statement as a *switch* statement to make your program more efficient and more readable.

## Understanding *switch* statement syntax

The syntax of a *switch* statement is as follows (*switch*, *case*, and *default* are keywords):

```

switch ( controllingExpression )
{
    case constantExpression :
        statements
        break;
    case constantExpression :
        statements
        break;
    ...
    default :
        statements
        break;
}

```

The *controllingExpression*, which must be enclosed in parentheses, is evaluated once. Control then jumps to the block of code identified by the *constantExpression*, whose value is equal to the result of the *controllingExpression*. (The *constantExpression* identifier is also called a *case label*.) Execution runs as far as the *break* statement, at which point the *switch* statement finishes and the program continues at the first statement that follows the closing brace of the *switch* statement. If none of the *constantExpression* values is equal to the value of the *controllingExpression*, the statements below

the optional *default* label run.

#### NOTE

Each *constantExpression* value must be unique, so the *controllingExpression* will match only one of them. If the value of the *controllingExpression* does not match any *constantExpression* value and there is no *default* label, program execution continues with the first statement that follows the closing brace of the *switch* statement.

So, you can rewrite the previous cascading *if* statement as the following *switch* statement:

```
switch (day)
{
    case 0 :
        dayName = "Sunday";
        break;
    case 1 :
        dayName = "Monday";
        break;
    case 2 :
        dayName = "Tuesday";
        break;
    ...
    default :
        dayName = "Unknown";
        break;
}
```

## Following the *switch* statement rules

The *switch* statement is very useful, but unfortunately, you can't always use it when you might like to. Any *switch* statement you write must adhere to the following rules:

- You can use *switch* only on certain data types, such as *int*, *char*, or *string*. With any other types (including *float* and *double*), you must use an *if* statement.
- The *case* labels must be constant expressions, such as 42 if the *switch* data type is an *int*, '4' if the *switch* data type is a *char*, or "42" if the *switch* data



type is a *string*. If you need to calculate your *case* label values at run time, you must use an *if* statement.

- The *case* labels must be unique expressions. In other words, two *case* labels cannot have the same value.
- You can specify that you want to run the same statements for more than one value by providing a list of *case* labels and no intervening statements, in which case the code for the final label in the list is executed for all cases in that list. However, if a label has one or more associated statements, execution cannot fall through to subsequent labels; in this case, the compiler generates an error. The following code fragment illustrates these points:

```
switch (trumps)
{
    case Hearts :
    case Diamonds :    // Fall-through allowed - no code between labels
        color = "Red";    // Code executed for Hearts and Diamonds
        break;
    case Clubs :
        color = "Black";
    case Spades :    // Error - code between labels
        color = "Black";
        break;
}
```

#### NOTE

The *break* statement is the most common way to stop fall-through, but you can also use a *return* statement to exit from the method containing the *switch* statement, or a *throw* statement to generate an exception and abort the *switch* statement. The *throw* statement is described in [Chapter 6](#).

#### SWITCH FALL-THROUGH RULES

Because you cannot accidentally fall through from one *case* label to the next if there is any intervening code, you can freely rearrange the sections of a *switch* statement without affecting its meaning (including the *default* label, which by convention is usually—but does not have to be—placed as the last label).

C and C++ programmers should note that the *break* statement is mandatory for every case in a *switch* statement (even the default case). This requirement is a good thing—it is common in C or C++

programs to forget the *break* statement, allowing execution to fall through to the next label and leading to bugs that are difficult to spot.

If you really want to, you can mimic C/C++ fall-through in C# by using a *goto* statement to go to the following *case* or *default* label. Using *goto* in general is not recommended, though, and this book does not show you how to do it.

In the following exercise, you will complete a program that reads the characters of a string and maps each character to its XML representation. For example, the left angle bracket character, `<`, has a special meaning in XML (it's used to form elements). If you have data that contains this character, it must be translated into the text entity `&lt;`; so that an XML processor knows that it is data and not part of an XML instruction. Similar rules apply to the right angle bracket (`>`), ampersand (`&`), single quotation mark (`'`), and double quotation mark (`"`) characters. You will write a *switch* statement that tests the value of the character and traps the special XML characters as *case* labels.

Write *switch* statements

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the SwitchStatement project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 4\Windows X\SwitchStatement folder in your Documents folder.
3. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.  
Visual Studio 2013 builds and runs the application. The application displays a form containing two text boxes separated by a Copy button.
4. Type the following sample text into the upper text box:  
**`inRange = (lo <= number) && (hi >= number);`**
5. Click Copy.

The statement is copied verbatim into the lower text box, and no translation of the `<`, `&`, or `>` characters occurs, as shown in the following screen shot which shows the Windows 8.1 version of the application.

```
inRange = (lo <= number) && (hi >= number);
```

Copy

```
inRange = (lo <= number) && (hi >= number);
```

6. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging.
7. Display the code for MainWindow.xaml.cs in the Code and Text Editor window and locate the *copyOne* method.

The *copyOne* method copies the character specified as its input parameter to the end of the text displayed in the lower text box. At the moment, *copyOne* contains a *switch* statement with a single *default* action. In the following few steps, you will modify this *switch* statement to convert characters that are significant in XML to their XML mapping. For example, the < character will be converted to the string &lt;.

8. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *switch* statement after the opening brace for the statement and directly before the *default* label:

```
switch (current)
{
    case '<' :
        target.Text += "&lt;";
        break;
    default:
        target.Text += current;
        break;
```

```
}
```

If the current character being copied is a left angle bracket (<), the preceding code appends the string “&lt;” to the text being output in its place.

9. Add the following statements to the *switch* statement after the *break* statement you have just added and above the *default* label:

```
case '>' :  
    target.Text += "&gt;";  
    break;  
case '&#x0027;' :  
    target.Text += "&amp;";  
    break;  
case '\"' :  
    target.Text += "&#34;";  
    break;  
case '\\' :  
    target.Text += "&#39;";  
    break;
```

#### NOTE

The single quotation mark (') and double quotation mark (") have a special meaning in C#—they are used to delimit character and string constants. The backslash (\) in the final two *case* labels is an escape character that causes the C# compiler to treat these characters as literals rather than as delimiters.

10. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
11. Type the following text into the upper text box:  
**inRange = (lo <= number) && (hi >= number);**
12. Click Copy.

The statement is copied into the lower text box. This time, each character undergoes the XML mapping implemented in the *switch* statement. The target text box displays the following text:

**inRange = (lo &lt;= number) &amp;&amp; (hi &gt;= number);**

13. Experiment with other strings, and verify that all special characters (<, >, &, “, and ’) are handled correctly.
14. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging (or simply close the application if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8).

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned about Boolean expressions and variables. You saw how to use Boolean expressions with the *if* and *switch* statements to make decisions in your programs, and you combined Boolean expressions by using the Boolean operators.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 5](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this	Example
Determine whether two values are equivalent	Use the == operator or the != operator.	<code>answer == 42</code>
Compare the value of two expressions	Use the <, <=, >, or >= operator.	<code>age &gt;= 21</code>
Declare a Boolean variable	Use the bool keyword as the type of the variable.	<code>bool inRange;</code>
Create a Boolean expression that is true only if two conditions are both true	Use the && operator.	<code>inRange = (lo     &lt;= number)     &amp;&amp;     ...</code>

		<pre>(number &lt;= hi);</pre>
Create a Boolean expression that is true if either of two conditions is true	Use the    operator.	<pre>outOfRange = (number &lt; lo)    (hi &lt; number);</pre>
Run a statement if a condition is true	Use an if statement.	<pre>if (inRange)     process();</pre>
Run more than one statement if a condition is true	Use an if statement and a block.	<pre>if (seconds == 59) {     seconds = 0;     minutes++; }</pre>
Associate different statements with different values of a controlling expression	Use a switch statement.	<pre>switch (current) {     case 0:         ...         break;     case 1:         ...         break;     default :         ...         break; }</pre>

# Chapter 5. Using compound assignment and iteration statements

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Using compound assignment operators
- Writing *while* statements
- Writing *do* statements

**Chapter 4** demonstrates how to use the *if* and *switch* constructs to run statements selectively. In this chapter, you'll see how to use a variety of iteration (or *looping*) statements to run one or more statements repeatedly.

When you write iteration statements, you usually need to control the number of iterations that you perform. You can achieve this by using a variable, updating its value as each iteration is performed, and stopping the process when the variable reaches a particular value. To help simplify this process, you'll start by learning about the special assignment operators that you should use to update the value of a variable in these circumstances.

## Using compound assignment operators

You've already seen how to use arithmetic operators to create new values. For example, the following statement uses the plus operator (+) to display to the console a value that is 42 greater than the variable *answer*:

```
Console.WriteLine(answer + 42);
```

You've also seen how to use assignment statements to change the value of a

variable. The following statement uses the assignment operator (=) to change the value of *answer* to 42:

```
answer = 42;
```

If you want to add 42 to the value of a variable, you can combine the assignment operator and the plus operator. For example, the following statement adds 42 to *answer*. After this statement runs, the value of *answer* is 42 more than it was before:

```
answer = answer + 42;
```

Although this statement works, you'll probably never see an experienced programmer write code like this. Adding a value to a variable is so common that C# provides a way for you to perform this task in a shorthand manner by using the operator +=. To add 42 to *answer*, you can write the following statement:

```
answer += 42;
```

You can use this notation to combine any arithmetic operator with the assignment operator, as the following table shows. These operators are collectively known as the *compound assignment operators*.

Don't write this	Write this
variable = variable * number;	variable *= number;
variable = variable / number;	variable /= number;
variable = variable % number;	variable %= number;
variable = variable + number;	variable += number;



```
variable = variable - number;
```

```
variable -= number;
```

#### TIP

The compound assignment operators share the same precedence and right associativity as the corresponding simple assignment operators.

The `+=` operator also works on strings; it appends one string to the end of another. For example, the following code displays “Hello John” on the console:

```
string name = "John";  
string greeting = "Hello ";  
greeting += name;  
Console.WriteLine(greeting);
```

You cannot use any of the other compound assignment operators on strings.

#### TIP

Use the increment (`++`) and decrement (`--`) operators instead of a compound assignment operator when incrementing or decrementing a variable by 1. For example, replace

```
count += 1;  
with:  
  
count++;
```

## Writing *while* statements

You use a *while* statement to run a statement repeatedly for as long as some condition is true. The syntax of a *while* statement is as follows:

```
while ( booleanExpression )  
    statement
```

The Boolean expression (which must be enclosed in parentheses) is evaluated, and if it is true, the statement runs and then the Boolean expression is evaluated again. If the expression is still true, the statement is repeated and then the Boolean expression is evaluated yet again. This process continues until the Boolean expression evaluates to false, at which point the *while* statement exits. Execution then continues with the first statement that follows the *while* statement. A *while* statement shares the following syntactic similarities with an *if* statement (in fact, the syntax is identical except for the keyword):

- The expression must be a Boolean expression.
- The Boolean expression must be written within parentheses.
- If the Boolean expression evaluates to false when first evaluated, the statement does not run.
- If you want to perform two or more statements under the control of a *while* statement, you must use braces to group those statements in a block.

Here's a *while* statement that writes the values 0 through 9 to the console. Note that as soon as the variable *i* reaches the value 10, the *while* statement finishes and the code in the statement block does not run:

```
int i = 0;
while (i < 10)
{
    Console.WriteLine(i);
    i++;
}
```

All *while* statements should terminate at some point. A common beginner's mistake is forgetting to include a statement to cause the Boolean expression eventually to evaluate to false and terminate the loop, which results in a program that runs forever. In the example, the statement *i++*; performs this role.

#### NOTE

The variable *i* in the *while* loop controls the number of iterations that the loop performs. This is a common idiom, and the variable that performs this role is sometimes called the *sentinel*

variable. You can also create nested loops (one loop inside another), and in these cases it is common to extend this naming pattern to use the letters *j*, *k*, and even *l* as the names of the sentinel variables used to control the iterations in these loops.

Tip As with *if* statements, it is recommended that you always use a block with a *while* statement, even if the block contains only a single statement. This way if you decide to add more statements to the body of the *while* construct later, it is clear that you should add them to the block. If you don't do this, only the first statement that immediately follows the Boolean expression in the *while* construct will be executed as part of the loop, resulting in difficult-to-spot bugs such as this:

```
int i = 0;
while (i < 10)
    Console.WriteLine(i);
    i++;
```

This code iterates forever, displaying an infinite number of zeros, because only the *Console.WriteLine* statement—and not the *i++*; statement—is executed as part of the *while* construct.

In the following exercise, you will write a *while* loop to iterate through the contents of a text file one line at a time and write each line to a text box in a form.

Write a *while* statement

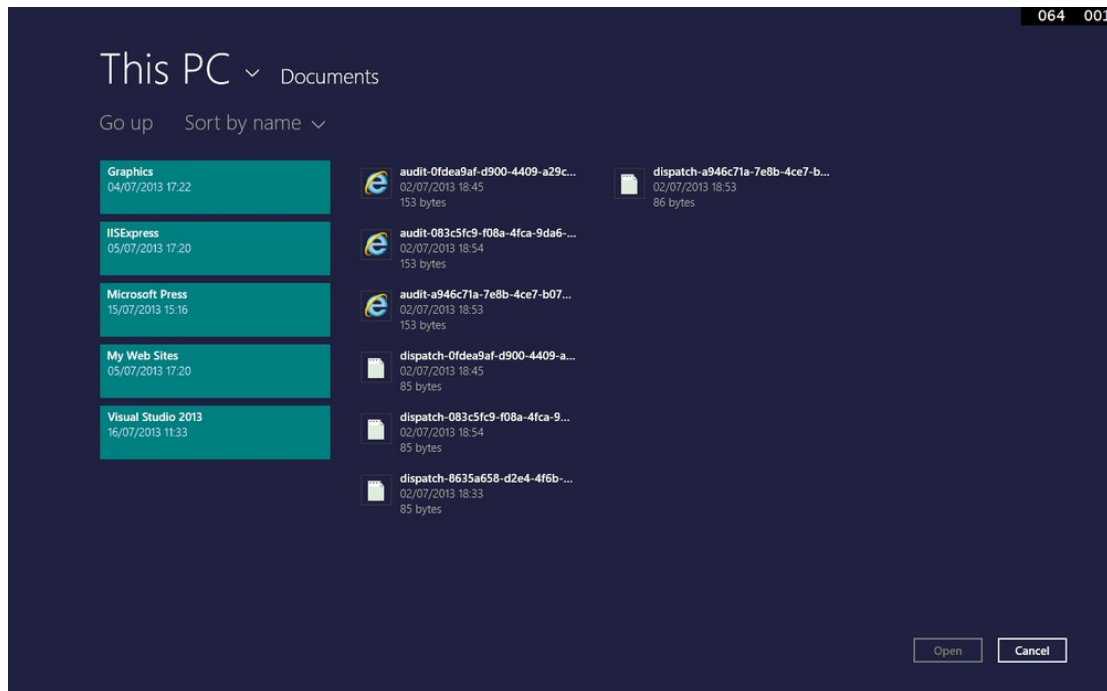
1. Using Microsoft Visual Studio 2013, open the WhileStatement project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 5\Windows X\WhileStatement folder in your Documents folder.

2. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

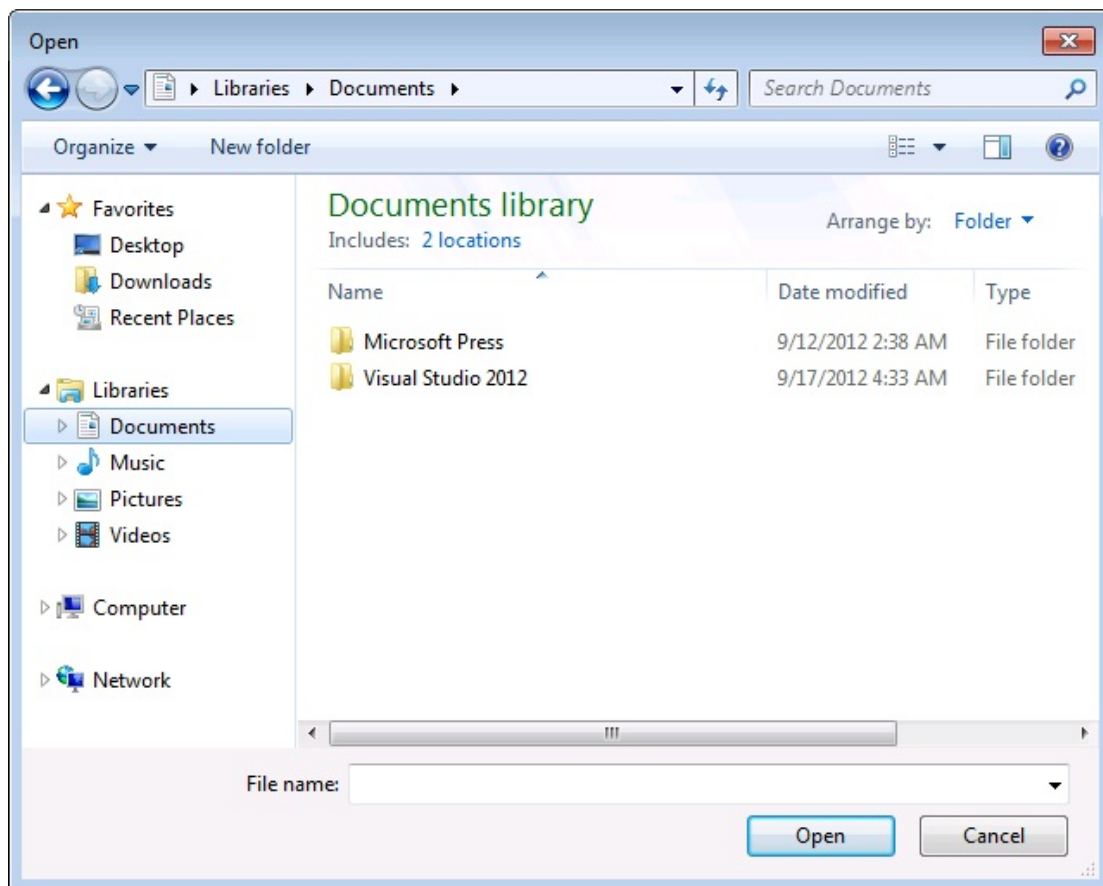
Visual Studio 2013 builds and runs the application. The application is a simple text file viewer that you can use to select a text file and display its contents.

3. Click Open File.

If you are using Windows 8.1, the Open file picker appears and displays the files in the Documents folder, as shown in the following image (the list of files and folders might be different on your computer).



If you are using Windows 7, the Open dialog box is displayed like this:



Whichever operating system you are using, you can use this feature to

move to a folder and select a file to display.

4. Move to the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 5\Windows X\WhileStatement\WhileStatement folder in your Documents folder.
5. Select the file MainWindow.xaml.cs and then click Open.

The name of the file, MainWindow.xaml.cs, appears in the text box at the top of the form, but the contents of the file do not appear in the large text box. This is because you have not yet implemented the code that reads the contents of the file and displays it. You will add this functionality in the following steps.

6. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging (or close the application if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8).
7. Display the code for the file MainWindow.xaml.cs in the Code and Text Editor window, and locate the *openFileClick* method.

This method runs when the user clicks the Open button to select a file in the Open dialog box. The way in which this method is implemented is different between the different versions of the application. It is not necessary for you to understand the exact details of how this method works at this point—simply accept the fact that this method prompts the user for a file (using a *FileOpenPicker* or *OpenFileDialog* window) and opens the selected file for reading. (In the Windows 7 version, this method simply displays the *OpenFileDialog* window, and when the user selects a file, the *openFileDialogFileOk* method runs, so it is actually this method that opens the file for reading.)

The final two statements in the *openFileClick* method (Windows 8.1) or *openFileDialogFileOk* method (Windows 7) are important, however. In the Windows 8.1 version of the code, they look like this:

```
TextReader reader = new StreamReader(inputStream.AsStreamForRead());  
displayData(reader);
```

The first statement declares a *TextReader* variable called *reader*.

*TextReader* is a class provided by the Microsoft.NET Framework that you can use for reading streams of characters from sources such as files. It is located in the *System.IO* namespace. This statement makes the data in the file specified by the user in the *FileOpenPicker* available to the *TextReader* object, which can then be used to read the data from the file. The final statement calls a method named *displayData*, passing *reader* as a parameter to this method. The *displayData* method reads the data by using the *reader* object and displays it to the screen (or it will do so once you have written the code to accomplish this).

In the Windows 7 version of the code, the corresponding statements look like this:

```
TextReader reader = src.OpenText();
displayData(reader);
```

The *src* variable is a *FileInfo* object populated with information about the file the user selected using the *OpenFileDialog* window. The *FileInfo* class is another class found in the .NET Framework, and it provides the *OpenText* method for opening a file for reading. The first statement opens the file selected by the user so that the *reader* variable can retrieve the contents of this file. As in the Windows 8.1 version of the code, the second statement calls the *displayData* method, passing *reader* as the parameter.

8. Examine the *displayData* method. It looks like this in both versions:

```
private void displayData(TextReader reader)
{
    // TODO: add while loop here
}
```

You can see that, other than the comment, this method is currently empty. This is where you need to add the code to fetch and display the data.

9. Replace the *// TODO: add while loop here* comment with the following statement:

```
source.Text = "";
```

The *source* variable refers to the large text box on the form. Setting its *Text* property to the empty string (“”) clears any text that is currently displayed in this text box.

10. Add the following statement after the previous line that you added to the *displayData* method:

```
string line = reader.ReadLine();
```

This statement declares a *string* variable called *line* and calls the *reader.ReadLine* method to read the first line from the file into this variable. This method returns either the next line of text from the file or a special value called *null* when there are no more lines to read.

11. Add the following statements to the *displayData* method, after the code you have just entered:

```
while (line != null)
{
    source.Text += line + '\n';
    line = reader.ReadLine();
}
```

This is a *while* loop that iterates through the file one line at a time until there are no more lines available.

The Boolean expression at the start of the *while* loop examines the value in the *line* variable. If it is not *null*, the body of the loop displays the current line of text by appending it to the *Text* property of the *source* text box, together with a newline character (‘\n’—the *ReadLine* method of the *TextReader* object strips out the newline characters as it reads each line, so the code needs to add it back in again). The *while* loop then reads in the next line of text before performing the next iteration. The *while* loop finishes when there is no more text to read in the file, and the *ReadLine* method returns a *null* value.

12. If you are using Windows 8.1, type the following statement after the closing brace at the end of the *while* loop:

```
reader.Dispose();
```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, type the following statement:

```
reader.Close();
```

These statements release the resources associated with the file and close it. This is good practice because it makes it possible other applications to use the file and also frees up any memory and other resources used to access the file.

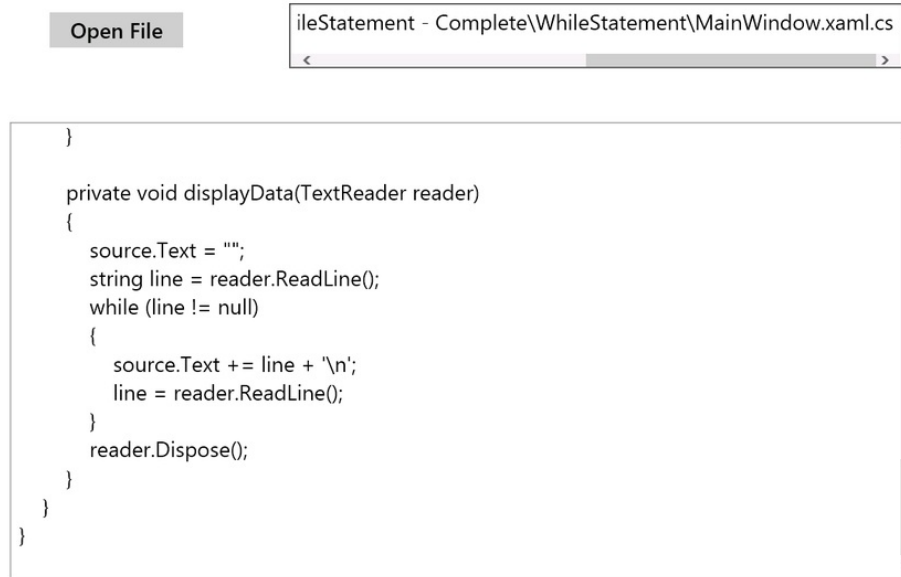
13. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
14. When the form appears, click Open File.
15. In the Open file picker or Open dialog box, move to the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 5\Windows X\WhileStatement\WhileStatement folder in your Documents folder, select the file MainWindow.xaml.cs, and then click Open.

#### NOTE

Don't try to open a file that does not contain text. If you attempt to open an executable program or a graphics file, for example, the application will simply display a text representation of the binary information in this file. If the file is large, it might hang the application, requiring you to forcibly terminate it.

This time, the contents of the selected file appear in the text box—you should recognize the code that you have been editing. The following image shows the Windows 8.1 version of the application running; the Windows 7 version functions in the same manner:





16. Scroll through the text in the text box and find the *displayData* method. Verify that this method contains the code you just added.
17. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging (or close the application if you are using Windows 7).

## Writing *for* Statements

In C#, most *while* statements have the following general structure:

```
initialization
while (Boolean expression)
{
    statement
    update control variable
}
```

The *for* statement in C# provides a more formal version of this kind of construct by combining the initialization, Boolean expression, and code that updates the control variable. You'll find the *for* statement useful because it is much harder to accidentally leave out the code that initializes or updates the control variable, so

you are less likely to write code that loops forever. Here is the syntax of a *for* statement:

```
for (initialization; Boolean expression; update control variable)
    statement
```

The statement that forms the body of the *for* construct can be a single line of code or a code block enclosed in braces.

You can rephrase the *while* loop shown earlier that displays the integers from 0 through 9 as the following *for* loop:

```
for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++)
{
    Console.WriteLine(i);
}
```

The initialization occurs just once, at the very beginning of the loop. Then, if the Boolean expression evaluates to *true*, the statement runs. The control variable update occurs and then the Boolean expression is reevaluated. If the condition is still *true*, the statement is executed again, the control variable is updated, the Boolean expression is evaluated again, and so on.

Notice that the initialization occurs only once, that the statement in the body of the loop always executes before the update occurs, and that the update occurs before the Boolean expression reevaluates.

#### TIP

As with the *while* statement, it is considered good practice to always use a code block even if the body of the *for* loop comprises just a single statement. If you add additional statements to the body of the *for* loop later, this approach will help to ensure that your code is always executed as part of each iteration.

You can omit any of the three parts of a *for* statement. If you omit the Boolean expression, it defaults to *true*, so the following *for* statement runs forever:

```
for (int i = 0; ;i++)
{
    Console.WriteLine("somebody stop me!");
}
```

```
        Console.WriteLine( "Somebody stop me. ");  
    }
```

If you omit the initialization and update parts, you have a strangely spelled *while* loop:

```
int i = 0;  
for (; i < 10; )  
{  
    Console.WriteLine(i);  
    i++;  
}
```

#### NOTE

The initialization, Boolean expression, and update control variable parts of a *for* statement must always be separated by semicolons, even when they are omitted.

You can also provide multiple initializations and multiple updates in a *for* loop. (You can have only one Boolean expression, though.) To achieve this, separate the various initializations and updates with commas, as shown in the following example:

```
for (int i = 0, j = 10; i <= j; i++, j--)  
{  
    ...  
}
```

As a final example, here is the *while* loop from the preceding exercise recast as a *for* loop:

```
for (string line = reader.ReadLine(); line != null; line = reader.ReadLine())  
{  
    source.Text += line + '\n';  
}
```

## Understanding *for* statement scope

You might have noticed that you can declare a variable in the initialization part of a *for* statement. That variable is scoped to the body of the *for* statement and

disappears when the *for* statement finishes. This rule has two important consequences. First, you cannot use that variable after the *for* statement has ended because it's no longer in scope. Here's an example:

```
for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++)
{
    ...
}
Console.WriteLine(i); // compile-time error
```

Second, you can write two or more *for* statements that reuse the same variable name because each variable is in a different scope, as shown in the following code:

```
for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++)
{
    ...
}
for (int i = 0; i < 20; i += 2) // okay
{
    ...
}
```

## Writing *do* statements

The *while* and *for* statements both test their Boolean expression at the beginning of the loop. This means that if the expression evaluates to *false* on the first test, the body of the loop does not run—not even once. The *do* statement is different: its Boolean expression is evaluated after each iteration, so the body always executes at least once.

The syntax of the *do* statement is as follows (don't forget the final semicolon):

```
do
    statement
while (booleanExpression);
```

You must use a *statement* block if the body of the loop comprises more than one statement (the compiler will report a syntax error if you don't). Here's a version of the example that writes the values 0 through 9 to the console, this time

constructed by using a *do* statement:

```
int i = 0;
do
{
    Console.WriteLine(i);
    i++;
}
while (i < 10);
```

### THE *BREAK* AND *CONTINUE* STATEMENTS

In [Chapter 4](#), you saw how to use the *break* statement to jump out of a *switch* statement. You can also use a *break* statement to jump out of the body of an iteration statement. When you break out of a loop, the loop exits immediately and execution continues at the first statement that follows the loop. Neither the update nor the continuation condition of the loop is rerun.

In contrast, the *continue* statement causes the program to perform the next iteration of the loop immediately (after reevaluating the Boolean expression). Here's another version of the example that writes the values 0 through 9 to the console, this time using *break* and *continue* statements:

```
int i = 0;
while (true)
{
    Console.WriteLine("continue " + i);
    i++;
    if (i < 10)
        continue;
    else
        break;
}
```

This code is absolutely ghastly. Many programming guidelines recommend using *continue* cautiously or not at all because it is often associated with hard-to-understand code. The behavior of *continue* is also quite subtle. For example, if you execute a *continue* statement from within a *for* statement, the update part runs before performing the next iteration of the loop.

In the following exercise, you will write a *do* statement to convert a positive decimal whole number to its string representation in octal notation. The program is based on the following algorithm, based on a well-known mathematical procedure:

store the decimal number in the variable *dec*

```
do the following
    divide dec by 8 and store the remainder
    set dec to the quotient from the previous step
while dec is not equal to zero
combine the values stored for the remainder for each calculation in reverse order
```

For example, suppose that you want to convert the decimal number 999 to octal. You perform the following steps:

1. Divide 999 by 8. The quotient is 124 and the remainder is 7.
2. Divide 124 by 8. The quotient is 15 and the remainder is 4.
3. Divide 15 by 8. The quotient is 1 and the remainder is 7.
4. Divide 1 by 8. The quotient is 0 and the remainder is 1.
5. Combine the values calculated for the remainder at each step in reverse order. The result is 1747. This is the octal representation of the decimal value 999.

Write a *do* statement

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, open the DoStatement project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 5\Windows X\DoStatement folder in your Documents folder.
2. Display the MainWindow.xaml form in the Design View window.  
The form contains a text box called *number* in which the user can enter a decimal number. When the user clicks the Show Steps button, the octal representation of the number entered is generated. The text box to the right, called *steps*, shows the results of each stage of the calculation.
3. Display the code for MainWindow.xaml.cs in the Code and Text Editor window. Locate the *showStepsClick* method.  
This method runs when the user clicks the Show Steps button on the form. Currently it is empty.
4. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *showStepsClick*

method:

```
private void showStepsClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    int amount = int.Parse(number.Text);
    steps.Text = "";
    string current = "";
}
```

The first statement converts the string value in the *Text* property of the *number* text box into an *int* by using the *Parse* method of the *int* type and stores it in a local variable called *amount*.

The second statement clears the text displayed in the lower text box by setting its *Text* property to the empty string.

The third statement declares a *string* variable called *current* and initializes it to the empty string. You will use this string to store the digits generated at each iteration of the loop used to convert the decimal number to its octal representation.

5. Add the following *do* statement (shown in bold) to the *showStepsClick* method:

```
private void showStepsClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    int amount = int.Parse(number.Text);
    steps.Text = "";
    string current = "";
    do
    {
        int nextDigit = amount % 8;
        amount /= 8;
        int digitCode = '0' + nextDigit;
        char digit = Convert.ToChar(digitCode);
        current = digit + current;
        steps.Text += current + "\n";
    }
    while (amount != 0);
}
```

The algorithm used repeatedly performs integer arithmetic to divide the

*amount* variable by 8 and determine the remainder. The remainder after each successive division constitutes the next digit in the string being built. Eventually, when *amount* is reduced to 0, the loop finishes. Notice that the body must run at least once. This behavior is exactly what is required because even the number 0 has one octal digit.

Look more closely at the code; you will see that the first statement executed by the *do* loop is this:

```
int nextDigit = amount % 8;
```

This statement declares an *int* variable called *nextDigit* and initializes it to the remainder after dividing the value in *amount* by 8. This will be a number somewhere between 0 and 7.

The next statement in the *do* loop is

```
amount /= 8;
```

This is a compound assignment statement and is equivalent to writing *amount = amount / 8*;. If the value of *amount* is 999, the value of *amount* after this statement runs is 124.

The next statement is this:

```
int digitCode = '0' + nextDigit;
```

This statement requires a little explanation. Characters have a unique code according to the character set used by the operating system. In the character sets frequently used by the Microsoft Windows operating system, the code for character “0” has integer value 48. The code for character “1” is 49, the code for character “2” is 50, and so on, up to the code for character “9,” which has integer value 57. With C#, you can treat a character as an integer and perform arithmetic on it, but when you do so, C# uses the character’s code as the value. So the expression ‘0’ + *nextDigit* actually results in a value somewhere between 48 and 55 (remember that *nextDigit* will be between 0 and 7), corresponding to the code for the equivalent octal digit.



The fourth statement in the *do* loop is

```
char digit = Convert.ToChar(digitCode);
```

This statement declares a *char* variable called *digit* and initializes it to the result of the *Convert.ToChar(digitCode)* method call. The *Convert.ToChar* method takes an integer holding a character code and returns the corresponding character. So, for example, if *digitCode* has the value 54, *Convert.ToChar(digitCode)* returns the character “6”.

To summarize, the first four statements in the *do* loop have determined the character representing the least-significant (rightmost) octal digit corresponding to the number the user typed in. The next task is to prepend this digit to the string to be output, like this:

```
current = digit + current;
```

The next statement in the *do* loop is this:

```
steps.Text += current + "\n";
```

This statement adds to the *steps* text box the string containing the digits produced so far for the octal representation of the number. It also appends a newline character so that each stage of the conversion appears on a separate line in the text box.

Finally, the condition in the *while* clause at the end of the loop is evaluated:

```
while (amount != 0);
```

Because the value of *amount* is not yet 0, the loop performs another iteration.

In the final exercise of this chapter, you will use the Visual Studio 2013 debugger to step through the previous *do* statement to help you understand how it works.

Step through the *do* statement

1. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the *MainWindow.xaml.cs*

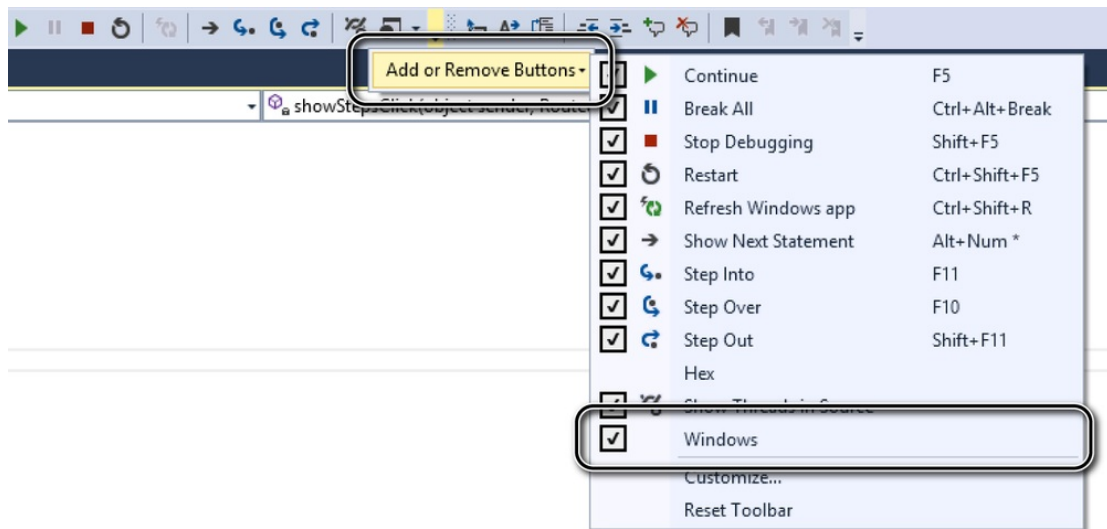
file, move the cursor to the first statement of the *showStepsClick* method:

```
int amount = int.Parse(number.Text);
```

2. Right-click anywhere in the first statement and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click Run To Cursor.
3. When the form appears, type **999** in the number text box on the left, and then click Show Steps.

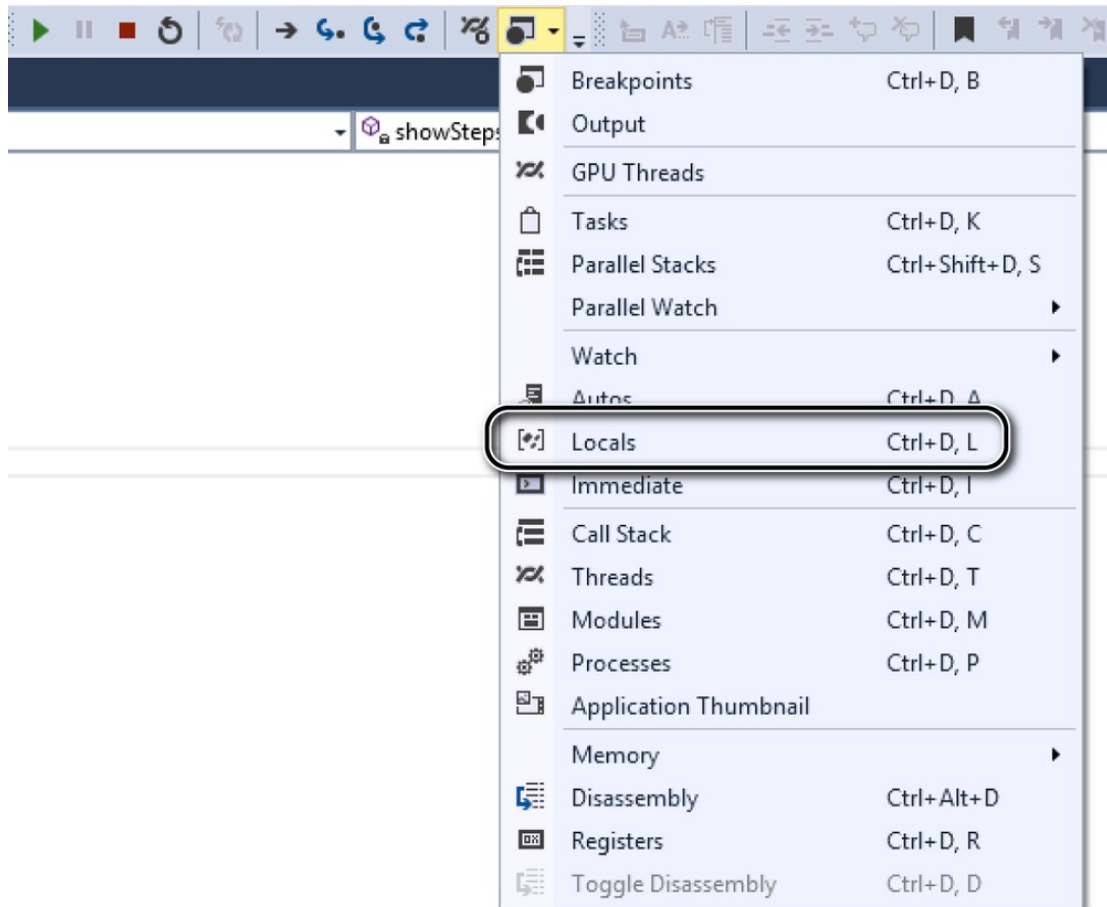
The program stops, and you are placed in Visual Studio 2013 debug mode. A yellow arrow in the left margin of the Code and Text Editor window and yellow highlighting of the code indicates the current statement.

4. Display the Debug toolbar if it is not visible. (On the View menu, point to Toolbars, and then click Debug.)
5. On the Debug toolbar, click the drop-down arrow, point to Add Or Remove Buttons, and then select Windows, as shown in the following image:

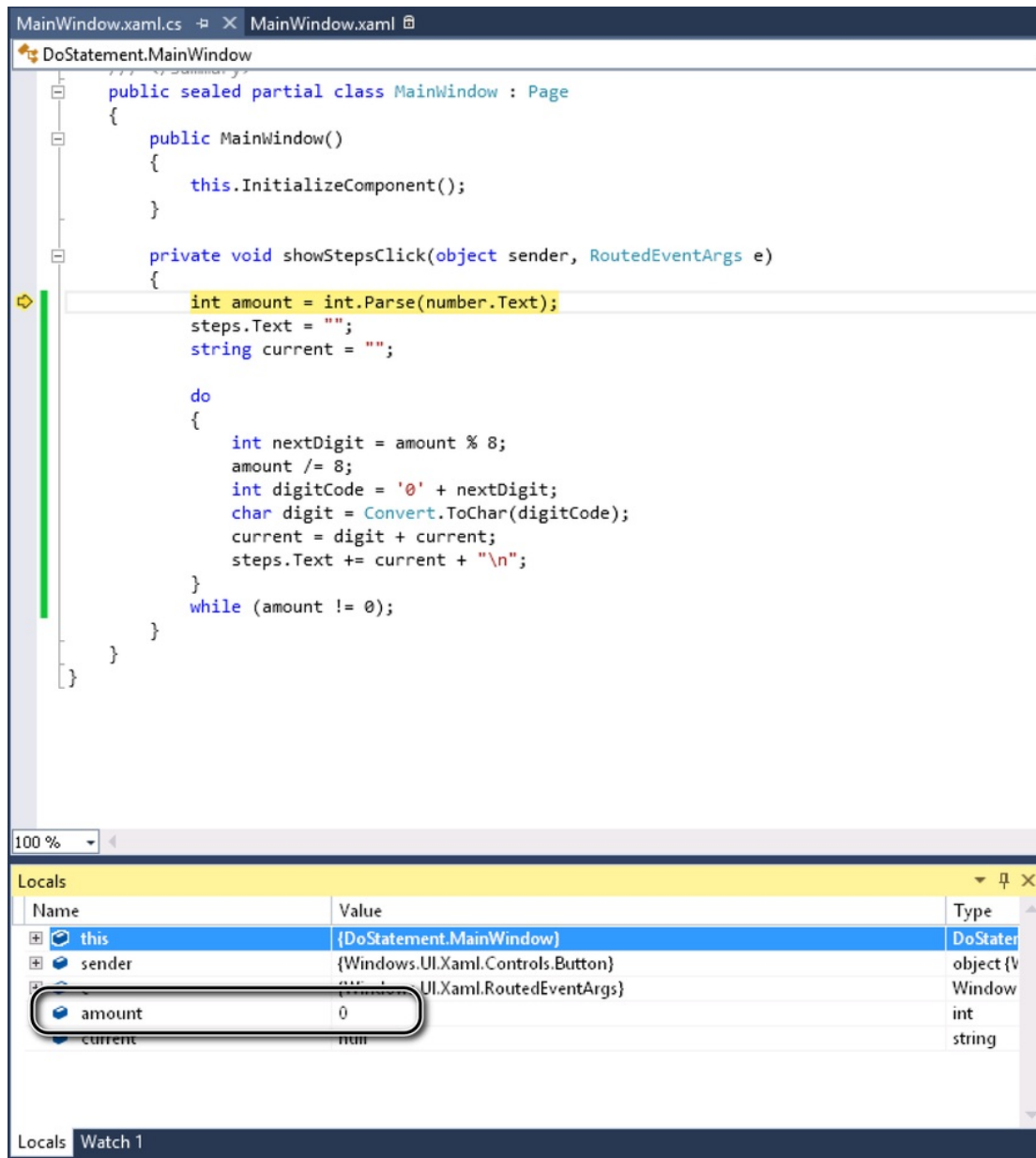


This action adds the Breakpoints Window button to the toolbar.

6. On the Debug toolbar, click the Breakpoints Window button, and then click Locals.



The Locals window appears (if it wasn't already open). This window displays the name, value, and type of the local variables in the current method, including the *amount* local variable. Notice that the value of *amount* is currently 0:



7. On the Debug toolbar, click the Step Into button.

The debugger runs the following statement:

```
int amount = int.Parse(number.Text);
```

The value of *amount* in the Locals window changes to 999, and the yellow arrow moves to the next statement.

8. Click Step Into again.

The debugger runs this statement:

```
steps.Text = "";
```

This statement does not affect the Locals window because *steps* is a control on the form and not a local variable. The yellow arrow moves to the next statement.

9. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs the statement shown here:

```
string current = "";
```

The yellow arrow moves to the opening brace at the start of the *do* loop. The *do* loop contains three local variables of its own: *nextDigit*, *digitCode*, and *digit*. Notice that these local variables appear in the Locals window, and the value of all three variables is initially set to 0.

10. Click Step Into.

The yellow arrow moves to the first statement within the *do* loop.

11. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs the following statement:

```
int nextDigit = amount % 8;
```

The value of *nextDigit* in the Locals window changes to 7. This is the remainder after dividing 999 by 8.

12. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs this statement:

```
amount /= 8;
```

The value of *amount* changes to 124 in the Locals window.

13. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs this statement:

```
int digitCode = '0' + nextDigit;
```

The value of *digitCode* in the Locals window changes to 55. This is the character code of the character “7” (48 + 7).

14. Click Step Into.

The debugger continues to this statement:

```
char digit = Convert.ToChar(digitCode);
```

The value of *digit* changes to “7” in the Locals window. The Locals window shows *char* values using both the underlying numeric value (in this case, 55) and also the character representation (“7”).

Note that in the Locals window, the value of the *current* variable is still “”.

15. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs the following statement:

```
current = current + digit;
```

The value of *current* changes to “7” in the Locals window.

16. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs the statement shown here:

```
steps.Text += current + "\n";
```

This statement displays the text “7” in the *steps* text box, followed by a newline character to cause subsequent output to be displayed on the next line in the text box. (The form is currently hidden behind Visual Studio, so you won’t be able to see it.) The cursor moves to the closing brace at the end of the *do* loop.

17. Click Step Into.

The yellow arrow moves to the *while* statement to evaluate whether the *do* loop has completed or whether it should continue for another iteration.

18. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs this statement:

```
while (amount != 0);
```

The value of *amount* is 124, the expression *124 != 0* evaluates to *true*, and so the *do* loop performs another iteration. The yellow arrow jumps back to the opening brace at the start of the *do* loop.

19. Click Step Into.

The yellow arrow moves to the first statement within the *do* loop again.

20. Repeatedly click Step Into to step through the next three iterations of the *do* loop and watch how the values of the variables change in the Locals window.

21. At the end of the fourth iteration of the loop, the value of *amount* is 0 and the value of *current* is “1747”. The yellow arrow is on the *while* condition at the end of the *do* loop:

```
while (amount != 0);
```

Because the value of *amount* is now 0, the expression *amount != 0* evaluates to *false*, and the *do* loop should terminate.

22. Click Step Into.

The debugger runs the following statement:

```
while (amount != 0);
```

As predicted, the *do* loop finishes, and the yellow arrow moves to the closing brace at the end of the *showStepsClick* method.

23. On the Debug menu, click Continue.

The form appears, displaying the four steps used to create the octal representation of 999: 7, 47, 747, and 1747.

004 001

064 001

Enter a number

999

Show Steps

7  
47  
747  
1747

24. Return to Visual Studio 2013. On the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging (or close the application if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8).

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to use the compound assignment operators to update numeric variables. You saw how to use *while*, *for*, and *do* statements to execute code repeatedly while some Boolean condition is *true*.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 6**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

---



To	Do this
Add an amount to a variable	<p>Use the compound addition operator. For example:</p> <pre>variable += amount;</pre>
Subtract an amount from a variable	<p>Use the compound subtraction operator. For example:</p> <pre>variable -= amount;</pre>
Run one or more statements zero or more times while a condition is true	<p>Use a while statement. For example:</p> <pre>int i = 0; while (i &lt; 10) {     Console.WriteLine(i);     i++; }</pre> <p>Alternatively, use a for statement. For example:</p> <pre>for (int i = 0; i &lt; 10; i++) {     Console.WriteLine(i); }</pre>
Repeatedly execute statements one or more times	<p>Use a do statement. For example:</p> <pre>int i = 0; do {     Console.WriteLine(i);     i++; } while (i &lt; 10);</pre>

# Chapter 6. Managing errors and exceptions

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Trying code and catching exceptions
- Using checked and unchecked integer arithmetic
- Throwing exceptions
- Using a *finally* block

You have now seen the core C# statements that you need to know to perform common tasks such as writing methods; declaring variables; using operators to create values; writing *if* and *switch* statements to run code selectively; and writing *while*, *for*, and *do* statements to run code repeatedly. However, the previous chapters haven't considered the possibility (or probability) that things can go wrong.

It is very difficult to ensure that a piece of code always works as expected. Failures can occur for a large number of reasons, many of which are beyond your control as a programmer. Any applications that you write must be capable of detecting failures and handling them in a graceful manner, either by taking the appropriate corrective actions or, if this is not possible, by reporting the reasons for the failure in the clearest possible way to the user. In this final chapter of **Part I**, you'll learn how C# uses exceptions to signal that an error has occurred and how to use the *try*, *catch*, and *finally* statements to catch and handle the errors that these exceptions represent.

By the end of this chapter, you'll have a solid foundation in all the fundamental elements of C#, on which you will build in **Part II**.

## Coping with errors

It's a fact of life that bad things sometimes happen. Tires are punctured, batteries run down, screwdrivers are never where you left them, and users of your applications behave in an unpredictable manner. In the world of computers, hard disks become corrupt, other applications running on the same computer as your program run amok and use up all the available memory, wireless network connections disappear at the most awkward moment, and even natural phenomena such as a nearby lightning strike can have an impact if it causes a power outage or network failure. Errors can occur at almost any stage when a program runs, and many of them might not actually be the fault of your own application, so how do you detect them and attempt to recover?

Over the years, a number of mechanisms have evolved. A typical approach adopted by older systems such as UNIX involved arranging for the operating system to set a special global variable whenever a method failed. Then, after each call to a method, you checked the global variable to see whether the method succeeded. C# and most other modern object-oriented languages don't handle errors in this manner; it's just too painful. Instead, they use *exceptions*. If you want to write robust C# programs, you need to know about exceptions.

## Trying code and catching exceptions

Errors can happen at any time, and using traditional techniques to manually add error-detecting code around every statement is cumbersome, time consuming, and error prone in its own right. You can also lose sight of the main flow of an application if each statement requires contorted error-handling logic to manage each possible error that can occur at every stage. Fortunately, C# makes it easy to separate the error-handling code from the code that implements the primary logic of a program by using exceptions and exception handlers. To write exception-aware programs, you need to do two things:

- Write your code within a *try* block (*try* is a C# keyword). When the code runs, it attempts to execute all the statements in the *try* block, and if none of the statements generates an exception, they all run, one after the other, to completion. However, if an error condition occurs, execution jumps out of the *try* block and into another piece of code designed to catch and handle the

exception—a *catch* handler.

- Write one or more *catch* handlers (*catch* is another C# keyword) immediately after the *try* block to handle any possible error conditions. A *catch* handler is intended to capture and handle a specific type of exception, and you can have multiple *catch* handlers after a *try* block, each one designed to trap and process a specific exception; you can provide different handlers for the different errors that could arise in the *try* block. If any one of the statements within the *try* block causes an error, the runtime throws an exception. The runtime then examines the *catch* handlers after the *try* block and transfers control directly to the first matching handler.

Here's an example of code in a *try* block that attempts to convert strings that a user has typed in some text boxes on a form to integer values, call a method to calculate a value, and write the result to another text box. Converting a string to an integer requires that the string contain a valid set of digits and not some arbitrary sequence of characters. If the string contains invalid characters, the *int.Parse* method throws a *FormatException*, and execution transfers to the corresponding *catch* handler. When the *catch* handler finishes, the program continues with the first statement that follows the handler. Note that if there is no handler that corresponds to the exception, the exception is said to be unhandled (this situation will be described shortly).

```
try
{
    int leftHandSide = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rightHandSide = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int answer = doCalculation(leftHandSide, rightHandSide);
    result.Text = answer.ToString();
}
catch (FormatException fEx)
{
    // Handle the exception
    ...
}
```

A *catch* handler employs syntax similar to that used by a method parameter to specify the exception to be caught. In the preceding example, when a *FormatException* is thrown, the *fEx* variable is populated with an object

containing the details of the exception.

The *FormatException* type has a number of properties that you can examine to determine the exact cause of the exception. Many of these properties are common to all exceptions. For example, the *Message* property contains a text description of the error that caused the exception. You can use this information when handling the exception, perhaps recording the details to a log file or displaying a meaningful message to the user and then asking the user to try again.

## Unhandled Exceptions

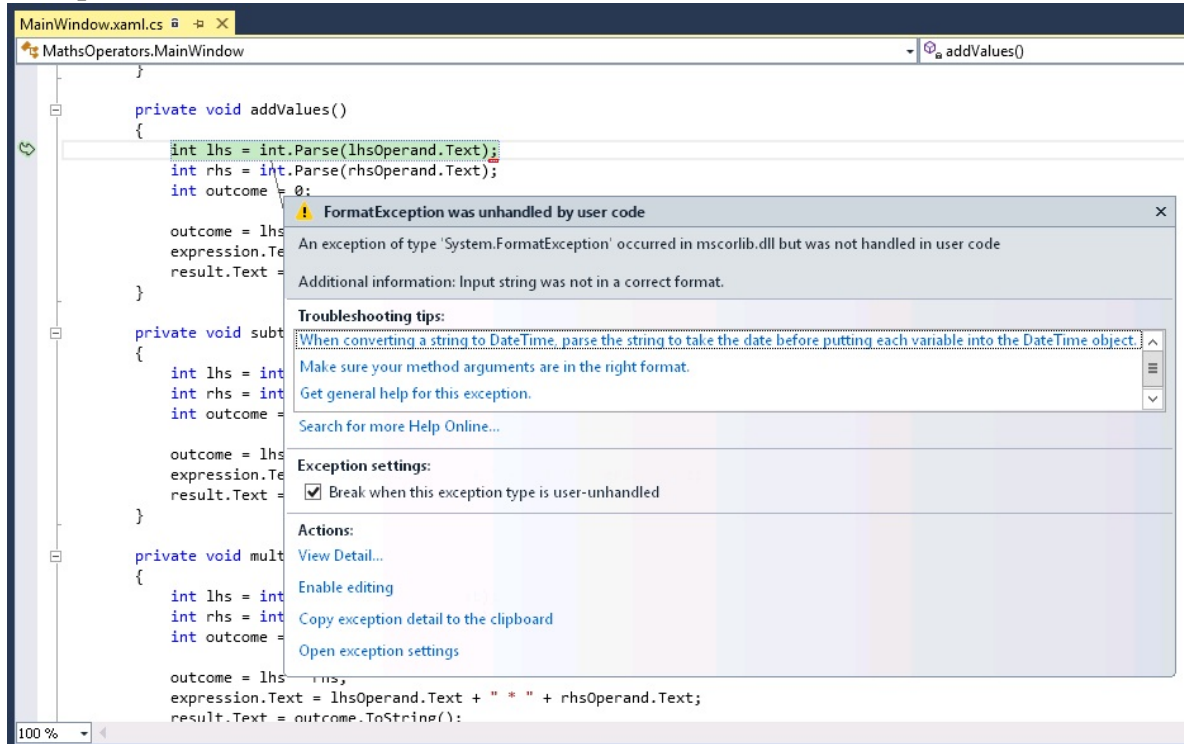
What happens if a *try* block throws an exception and there is no corresponding *catch* handler? In the previous example, it is possible that the *lhsOperand* text box contains the string representation of a valid integer but the integer it represents is outside the range of valid integers supported by C# (for example, “2147483648”). In this case, the *int.Parse* statement throws an *OverflowException*, which will not be caught by the *FormatException* *catch* handler. If this occurs and the *try* block is part of a method, the method immediately exits and execution returns to the calling method. If the calling method uses a *try* block, the runtime attempts to locate a matching *catch* handler for this *try* block and execute it. If the calling method does not use a *try* block or there is no matching *catch* handler, the calling method immediately exits and execution returns to its caller, where the process is repeated. If a matching *catch* handler is eventually found, the handler runs and execution continues with the first statement that follows the *catch* handler in the catching method.

### IMPORTANT

Notice that after catching an exception, execution continues in the method containing the *catch* block that caught the exception. If the exception occurred in a method other than the one containing the *catch* handler, control does *not* return to the method that caused the exception.

If, after cascading back through the list of calling methods, the runtime is unable to find a matching *catch* handler, the program terminates with an unhandled exception.

You can easily examine exceptions generated by your application. If you are running the application in Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 in debug mode (that is, on the Debug menu you selected Start Debugging to run the application) and an exception occurs, a dialog box similar to the one shown in the following image appears and the application pauses, helping you to determine the cause of the exception:



The application stops at the statement that caused the exception and you drop into the debugger. You can examine the values of variables, you can change the values of variables, and you can step through your code from the point at which the exception occurred by using the Debug toolbar and the various debug windows.

## Using multiple catch handlers

The previous discussion highlighted how different errors throw different kinds of exceptions to represent different kinds of failures. To cope with these situations, you can supply multiple *catch* handlers, one after the other, such as in the following:

```
try
{
```

```

        int leftHandSide = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
        int rightHandSide = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
        int answer = doCalculation(leftHandSide, rightHandSide);
        result.Text = answer.ToString();
    }
    catch (FormatException fEx)
    {
        //...
    }
    catch (OverflowException oEx)
    {
        //...
    }
}

```

If the code in the *try* block throws a *FormatException* exception, the statements in the *catch* block for the *FormatException* exception run. If the code throws an *OverflowException* exception, the *catch* block for the *OverflowException* exception runs.

#### NOTE

If the code in the *FormatException* *catch* block generates an *OverflowException* exception, it does not cause the adjacent *OverflowException* *catch* block to run. Instead, the exception propagates to the method that invoked this code, as described earlier in this section.

## Catching multiple exceptions

The exception-catching mechanism provided by C# and the Microsoft .NET Framework is quite comprehensive. The .NET Framework defines many types of exceptions, and any programs you write can throw most of them. It is highly unlikely that you will want to write *catch* handlers for every possible exception that your code can throw—remember that your application must be able to handle exceptions that you might not have even considered when you wrote it! So, how do you ensure that your programs catch and handle all possible exceptions?

The answer to this question lies in the way the different exceptions are related to one another. Exceptions are organized into families called *inheritance hierarchies*. (You will learn about inheritance in [Chapter 12](#).) *FormatException* and *OverflowException* both belong to a family called *SystemException*, as do a

number of other exceptions. *SystemException* is itself a member of a wider family simply called *Exception*, and this is the great-granddaddy of all exceptions. If you catch *Exception*, the handler traps every possible exception that can occur.

#### NOTE

The *Exception* family includes a wide variety of exceptions, many of which are intended for use by various parts of the .NET Framework. Some of these exceptions are somewhat esoteric, but it is still useful to understand how to catch them.

The next example shows how to catch all possible exceptions:

```
try
{
    int leftHandSide = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rightHandSide = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int answer = doCalculation(leftHandSide, rightHandSide);
    result.Text = answer.ToString();
}
catch (Exception ex) // this is a general catch handler
{
    //...
}
```

#### TIP

If you want to catch *Exception*, you can actually omit its name from the *catch* handler because it is the default exception:

```
catch
{
    // ...
}
```

However, this is not recommended. The exception object passed in to the *catch* handler can contain useful information concerning the exception, which is not easily accessible when using this version of the *catch* construct.

There is one final question you should be asking at this point: What happens if



the same exception matches multiple *catch* handlers at the end of a *try* block? If you catch *FormatException* and *Exception* in two different handlers, which one will run? (Or, will both execute?) When an exception occurs, the runtime uses the first handler it finds that matches the exception, and the others are ignored. This means that if you place a handler for *Exception* before a handler for *FormatException*, the *FormatException* handler will never run. Therefore, you should place more specific *catch* handlers above a general *catch* handler after a *try* block. If none of the specific *catch* handlers matches the exception, the general *catch* handler will.

In the following exercises, you will see what happens when an application throws an unhandled exception, and then you will write a *try* block and catch and handle an exception.

Observe how Windows reports unhandled exceptions

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the MathsOperators solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 6\Windows X\MathsOperators folder in your Documents folder.

This is a version of the program in **Chapter 2** that demonstrates the different arithmetic operators.

3. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

#### NOTE

For this exercise, ensure that you actually run the application without debugging, even if you are using Windows 8.1.

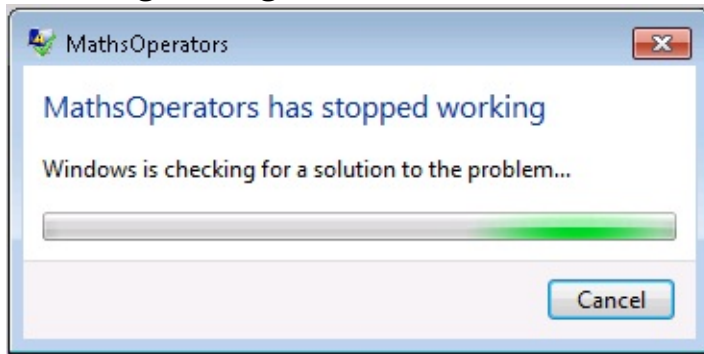
The form appears. You are now going to enter some text in the Left Operand box that will cause an exception. This operation will demonstrate the lack of robustness in the current version of the program.

4. In the Left Operand box, type **John**; in the Right Operand box, type **2**; click the + Addition button; and then click Calculate.

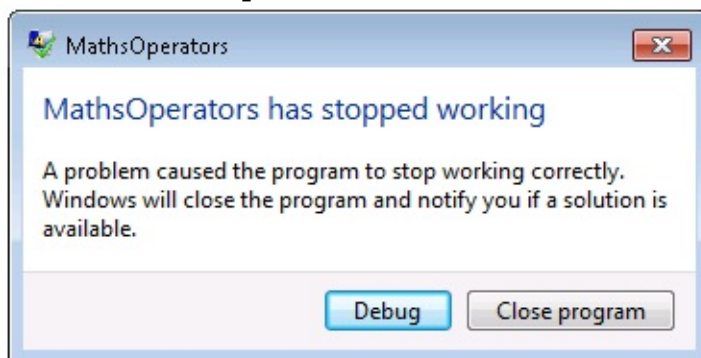
This input triggers Windows error handling. If you are using Windows 8.1,

the application terminates and you are returned to the Start screen.

If you are using the Windows 7 version of the code, you should see the following message box:

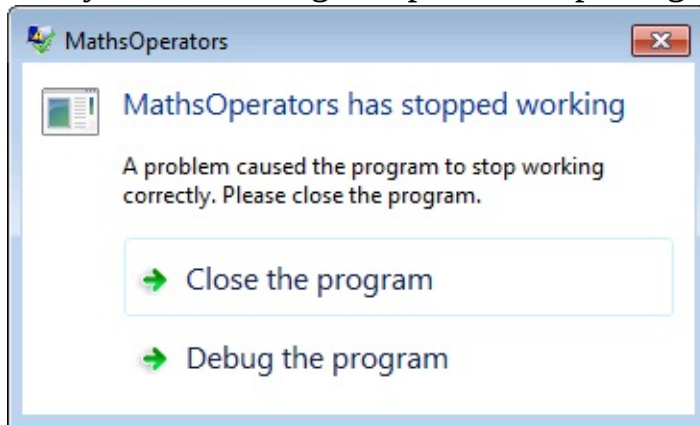


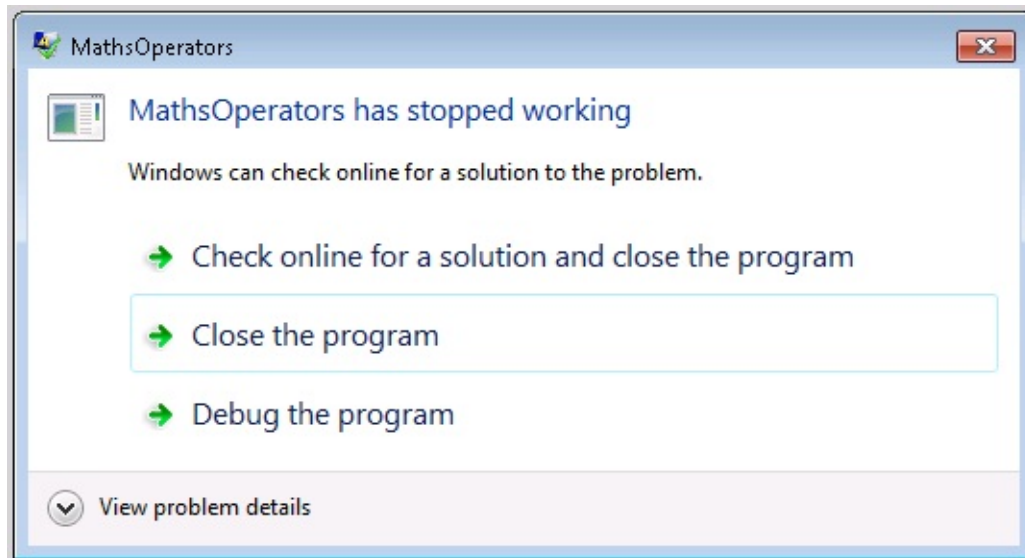
After a short while, this is followed by another dialog box that reports an unhandled exception:



If you click Debug, you can launch a new instance of Visual Studio over your program in debug mode, but for the time being, click Close Program.

You might see one of the following versions of this dialog box depending on how you have configured problem reporting in Control Panel:





If either of these dialog boxes appear, click Close The Program.

Additionally, you might be presented with a dialog box displaying the message “Do you want to send information about the problem?” Windows can gather information about failing applications and send this information to Microsoft. If this dialog box appears, click Cancel.

Now that you have seen how Windows traps and reports unhandled exceptions, the next step is to make the application more robust by handling invalid input and preventing unhandled exceptions from occurring.

Write a *try/catch* statement block

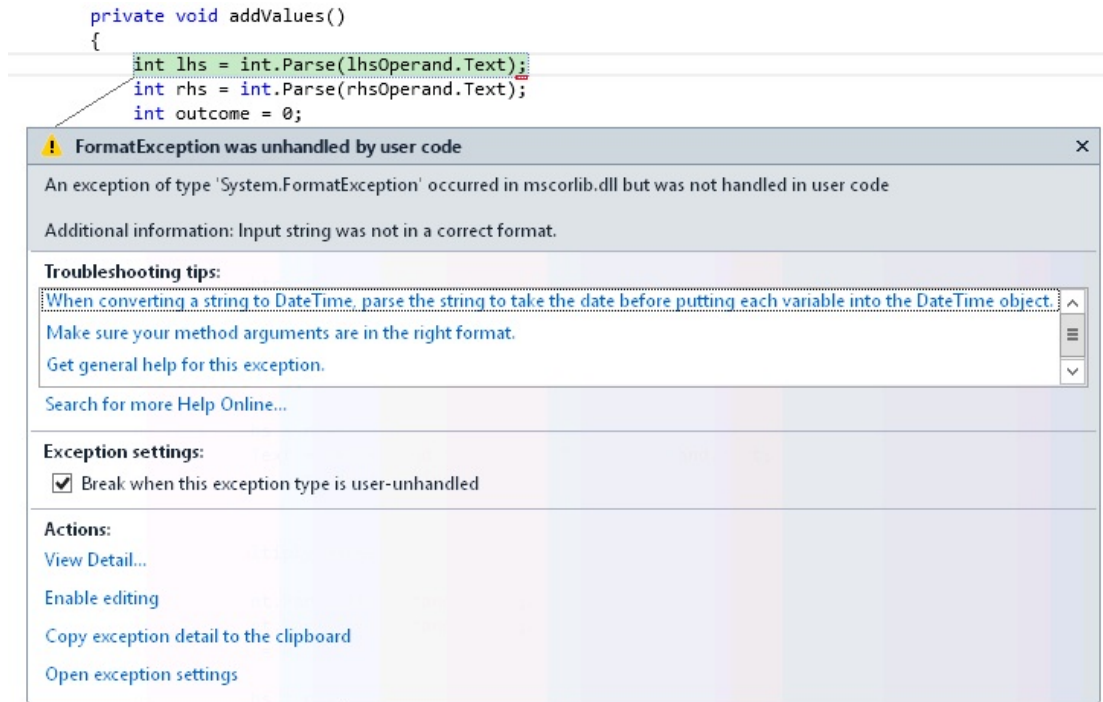
1. Return to Visual Studio 2013.
2. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
3. When the form appears, in the Left Operand box, type **John**; in the Right Operand box, type **2**; click the + Addition button;, and then click Calculate.

This input should cause the same exception that occurred in the previous exercise, except that now you are running using debug mode, so Visual Studio traps the exception and reports it.

#### NOTE

If a message box appears informing you that break mode failed because the file App.g.i.cs does not belong to the project being debugged, simply click OK. When the message box disappears, the exception will be displayed.

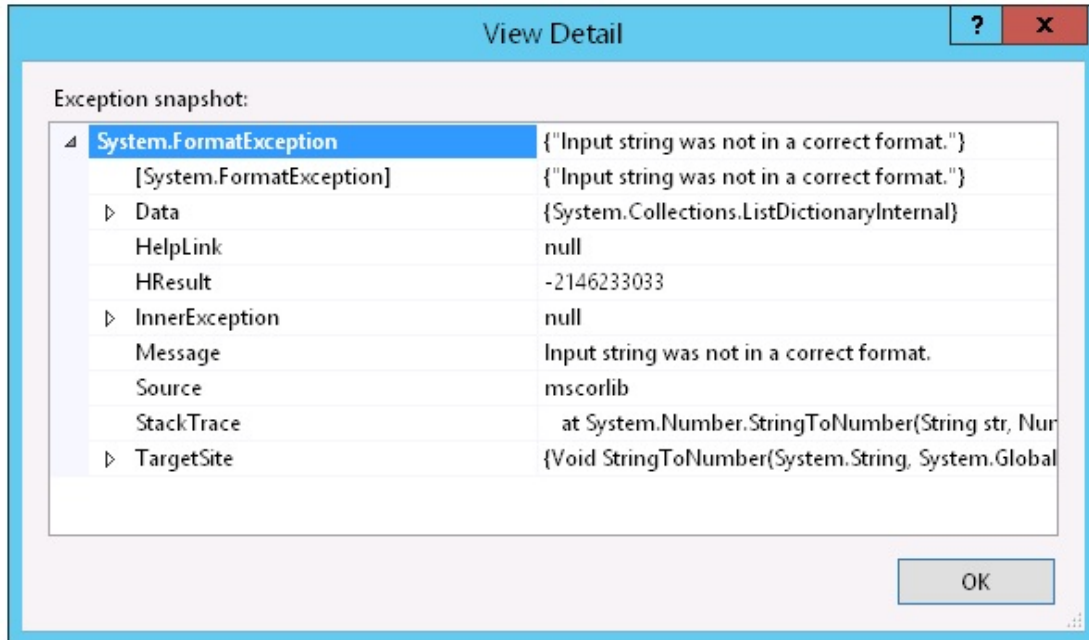
- Visual Studio displays your code and highlights the statement that caused the exception together with a dialog box that describes the exception. In this case, it is “Input string was not in a correct format.”



You can see that the exception was thrown by the call to `int.Parse` inside the `addValues` method. The problem is that this method is unable to parse the text “John” into a valid number.

- In the exception dialog box, click View Detail.

Another dialog box opens in which you can view more information about the exception. If you expand `System.FormatException`, you can see this information:



### TIP

Some exceptions are the result of other exceptions raised earlier. The exception reported by Visual Studio is just the final exception in this chain, but it is usually the earlier exceptions that highlight the real cause of the problem. You can drill into these earlier exceptions by expanding the *InnerException* property in the View Detail dialog box. Inner exceptions might have further inner exceptions, and you can keep digging down until you find an exception with the *InnerException* property set to *null* (as shown in the previous image). At this point, you have reached the initial exception, and this exception is typically the one that you need to correct.

- Click OK in the View Detail dialog box and then, in Visual Studio, in the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.
- Display the code for the file MainWindow.xaml.cs in the Code and Text Editor window, and locate the *addValues* method.
- Add a *try* block (including braces) around the statements inside this method, together with a *catch* handler for the *FormatException* exception, as shown in bold type here:

```
try
{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
}
```

```

        int outcome = 0;
        outcome = lhs + rhs;
        expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " + " + rhsOperand.Text;
        result.Text = outcome.ToString();
    }
    catch (FormatException fEx)
    {
        result.Text = fEx.Message;
    }
}

```

If a *FormatException* exception occurs, the *catch* handler displays the text held in the exception's *Message* property in the *result* text box at the bottom of the form.

- On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
- When the form appears, in the Left Operand box, type **John**; in the Right Operand box type **2**; click the + Addition button; and then click Calculate.

The *catch* handler successfully catches the *FormatException*, and the message “Input string was not in a correct format” is written to the Result text box. The application is now a bit more robust.

002 001

Left Operand

John

064 001

Right Operand

2

☒ + Addition  
☐ - Subtraction  
☐ \* Multiplication  
☐ / Division  
☐ % Remainder

Calculate

Expression:

Result:

Input string was not in a correct format.

- Replace John with the number **10**; in the Right Operand box type **Sharp**; and then click Calculate.

The *try* block surrounds the statements that parse both text boxes, so the same exception handler handles user input errors in both text boxes.

- In the Right Operand box, replace Sharp with **20**, click the + Addition button, and then click Calculate.

The application now works as expected and displays the value 30 in the Result box.

- In the Left Operand box, replace 10 with **John**, and then click the – Subtraction button.

Visual Studio drops into the debugger and reports a *FormatException* exception again. This time, the error has occurred in the *subtractValues* method, which does not include the necessary *try/catch* processing.

- On the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.

## Propagating exceptions

Adding a *try/catch* block to the *addValues* method has made that method more robust, but you need to apply the same exception handling to the other methods: *subtractValues*, *multiplyValues*, *divideValues*, and *remainderValues*. The code for each of these exception handlers will likely be very similar, resulting in you writing the same code in each method. Each of these methods is called by the *calculateClick* method when the user clicks the Calculate button. Therefore, to avoid duplication of the exception handling code, it makes sense to relocate it to the *calculateClick* method. If a *FormatException* occurs in any of the *subtractValues*, *multiplyValues*, *divideValues*, and *remainderValues* methods, it will be propagated back to the *calculateClick* method for handling as described in the section **Unhandled Exceptions** earlier in this chapter.

Propagate an exception back to the calling method

1. Display the code for the file *MainWindow.xaml.cs* in the Code and Text Editor window, and locate the *addValues* method.
2. Remove the *try* block and *catch* handler from the *addValues* method and return it to its original state, as shown in the following code:

```
private void addValues()  
{  
    // Add the values of the two text boxes and display the result  
    result = leftOperand + rightOperand;  
    resultText.Text = result.ToString();  
}
```

```

        int leftHandSide = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
        int rightHandSide = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
        int outcome = 0;
        outcome = lhs + rhs;
        expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " + " + rhsOperand.Text
        result.Text = outcome.ToString();
    }

```

3. Find the *calculateClick* method. Add to this method the *try* block and *catch* handler shown in the following example in bold:

```

private void calculateClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        if ((bool)addition.IsChecked)
        {
            addValues();
        }
        else if ((bool)subtraction.IsChecked)
        {
            subtractValues();
        }
        else if ((bool)multiplication.IsChecked)
        {
            multiplyValues();
        }
        else if ((bool)division.IsChecked)
        {
            divideValues();
        }
        else if ((bool)remainder.IsChecked)
        {
            remainderValues();
        }
    }
    catch (FormatException fEx)
    {
        result.Text = fEx.Message;
    }
}

```

4. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
5. When the form appears, in the Left Operand box, type **John**; in the Right



Operand box, type **2**; click the + Addition button; and then click Calculate.

As before, the *catch* handler successfully catches the *FormatException*, and the message “Input string was not in a correct format” is written to the Result text box. However, bear in mind that the exception was actually thrown in the *addValue* method, but it was caught by the handler in the *calculateClick* method.

6. Click the –Subtraction button, and then click Calculate.

This time, the *subtractValues* method causes the exception, but it is propagated back to the *calculateClick* method and handled in the same manner as before.

7. Test the \* Multiplication, / Division, and % Remainder buttons, and verify that the *FormatException* exception is caught and handled correctly.
8. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

#### NOTE

The decision as to whether to catch unhandled exceptions explicitly in a method depends on the nature of the application you are building. In some cases, it makes sense to catch exceptions as close as possible to the point at which they occur. In other situations, it is more useful to let an exception propagate back to the method that invoked the routine that threw the exception and handle the error there.

## Using checked and unchecked integer arithmetic

**Chapter 2** discusses how to use binary arithmetic operators such as + and \* on primitive data types such as *int* and *double*. It also instructs that the primitive data types have a fixed size. For example, a C# *int* is 32 bits. Because *int* has a fixed size, you know exactly the range of value that it can hold: it is –2147483648 to 2147483647.

#### TIP

If you want to refer to the minimum or maximum value of *int* in code, you can use the *int.MinValue* or *int.MaxValue* property.

The fixed size of the *int* type creates a problem. For example, what happens if you add 1 to an *int* whose value is currently 2147483647? The answer is that it depends on how the application is compiled. By default, the C# compiler generates code that allows the calculation to overflow silently and you get the wrong answer. (In fact, the calculation wraps around to the largest negative integer value, and the result generated is -2147483648.) The reason for this behavior is performance: integer arithmetic is a common operation in almost every program, and adding the overhead of overflow checking to each integer expression could lead to very poor performance. In many cases, the risk is acceptable because you know (or hope!) that your *int* values won't reach their limits. If you don't like this approach, you can turn on overflow checking.

#### TIP

You can turn on and off overflow checking in Visual Studio 2013 by setting the project properties. In Solution Explorer, click *YourProject* (where *YourProject* is the actual name of the project). On the Project menu, click *YourProject* Properties. In the project properties dialog box, click the Build tab. Click the Advanced button in the lower-right corner of the page. In the Advanced Build Settings dialog box, select or clear the Check for Arithmetic Overflow/Underflow check box.

Regardless of how you compile an application, you can use the *checked* and *unchecked* keywords to turn on and off integer arithmetic overflow checking selectively in parts of an application that you think need it. These keywords override the compiler option specified for the project.

## Writing checked statements

A checked statement is a block preceded by the *checked* keyword. All integer arithmetic in a checked statement always throws an *OverflowException* if an integer calculation in the block overflows, as shown in this example:

```
int number = int.MaxValue;  
checked
```

```
{
    int willThrow = number++;
    Console.WriteLine("this won't be reached");
}
```

#### IMPORTANT

Only integer arithmetic directly inside the *checked* block is subject to overflow checking. For example, if one of the checked statements is a method call, checking does not apply to code that runs in the method that is called.

You can also use the *unchecked* keyword to create an *unchecked* block statement. All integer arithmetic in an *unchecked* block is not checked and never throws an *OverflowException*. For example:

```
int number = int.MaxValue;
unchecked
{
    int wontThrow = number++;
    Console.WriteLine("this will be reached");
}
```

## Writing checked expressions

You can also use the *checked* and *unchecked* keywords to control overflow checking on integer expressions by preceding just the individual parenthesized expression with the *checked* or *unchecked* keyword, as shown in this example:

```
int wontThrow = unchecked(int.MaxValue + 1);
int willThrow = checked(int.MaxValue + 1);
```

The compound operators (such as `+=` and `-=`) and the increment, `++`, and decrement, `--`, operators are arithmetic operators and can be controlled by using the *checked* and *unchecked* keywords. Remember, `x += y;` is the same as `x = x + y;`.

#### IMPORTANT

You cannot use the *checked* and *unchecked* keywords to control floating-point (noninteger) arithmetic. The *checked* and *unchecked* keywords apply only to integer arithmetic using data

types such as *int* and *long*. Floating-point arithmetic never throws *OverflowException*—not even when you divide by 0.0. (Remember from [Chapter 2](#) that the .NET Framework has a special floating-point representation for infinity.)

In the following exercise, you will see how to perform checked arithmetic when using Visual Studio 2013.

Use checked expressions

1. Return to Visual Studio 2013.
2. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

You will now attempt to multiply two large values.

3. In the Left Operand box, type **9876543**; In the Right Operand box, type **9876543**; click the \* Multiplication button; and then click Calculate.

The value  $-1195595903$  appears in the Result box on the form. This is a negative value, which cannot possibly be correct. This value is the result of a multiplication operation that silently overflowed the 32-bit limit of the *int* type.

4. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.
5. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying *MainWindow.xaml.cs*, locate the *multiplyValues* method, which should look like this:

```
private void multiplyValues()
{
    int lhs = int.Parse(lhsOperand.Text);
    int rhs = int.Parse(rhsOperand.Text);
    int outcome = 0;
    outcome = lhs * rhs;
    expression.Text = lhsOperand.Text + " * " + rhsOperand.Text;
    result.Text = outcome.ToString();
}
```

The statement *outcome = lhs \* rhs*; contains the multiplication operation that is silently overflowing.

6. Edit this statement so that the calculation value is checked, like this:

```
outcome = checked(lhs * rhs);
```

The multiplication is now checked and will throw an *OverflowException* rather than silently returning the wrong answer.

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
8. In the Left Operand box, type **9876543**; in the Right Operand box, type **9876543**; click the \* Multiplication button; and then click Calculate.  
Visual Studio drops into the debugger and reports that the multiplication resulted in an *OverflowException* exception. You now need to add a handler to catch this exception and handle it more gracefully than just failing with an error.
9. On the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.
10. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the MainWindow.xaml.cs file, locate the *calculateClick* method.
11. Add the following *catch* handler (shown in bold) immediately after the existing *FormatException* *catch* handler in this method:

```
private void calculateClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        ...
    }
    catch (FormatException fEx)
    {
        result.Text = fEx.Message;
    }
    catch (OverflowException oEx)
    {
        result.Text = oEx.Message;
    }
}
```

The logic of this *catch* handler is the same as that for the *FormatException* *catch* handler. However, it is still worth keeping these handlers separate

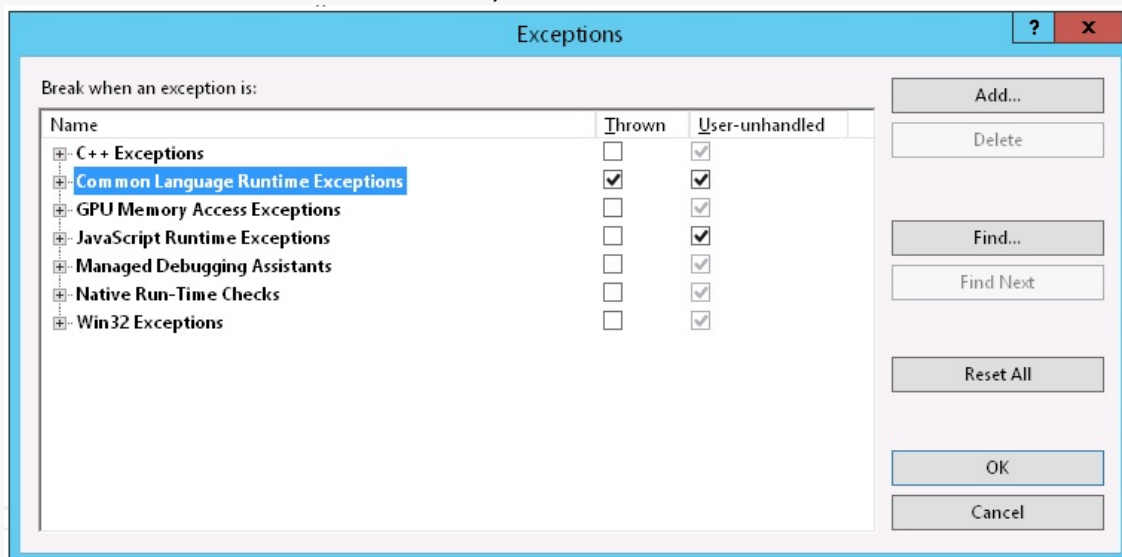
rather than simply writing a generic *Exception catch* handler because you might decide to handle these exceptions differently in the future.

12. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
13. In the Left Operand box, type **9876543**; in the Right Operand box, type **9876543**; click the \* Multiplication button; and then click Calculate.

The second *catch* handler successfully catches the *OverflowException* and displays the message “Arithmetic operation resulted in an overflow” in the Result box.

14. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

**EXCEPTION HANDLING AND THE VISUAL STUDIO DEBUGGER BY DEFAULT, THE VISUAL STUDIO DEBUGGER ONLY STOPS AN APPLICATION THAT IS BEING DEBUGGED AND REPORTS EXCEPTIONS THAT ARE UNHANDLED. SOMETIMES IT IS USEFUL TO BE ABLE TO DEBUG EXCEPTION HANDLERS THEMSELVES, AND IN THIS CASE, YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO TRACE EXCEPTIONS WHEN THEY ARE THROWN BY THE APPLICATION PRIOR TO THEM BEING CAUGHT. YOU CAN EASILY ENABLE THIS FUNCTIONALITY. ON THE DEBUG MENU, CLICK EXCEPTIONS. IN THE EXCEPTIONS DIALOG BOX, SELECT THE THROWN COLUMN FOR COMMON LANGUAGE RUNTIME EXCEPTIONS, AND THEN CLICK OK:**



Now, when exceptions such as *OverflowException* occur, Visual Studio will drop into the debugger, and you can use the Step Into button on the Debug toolbar to step into the *catch* handler. If you don't

want to catch all Common Language Runtime (CLR) exceptions in this way, you can be more selective. If you expand the Common Language Runtime Exceptions node, you can see the different categories of exceptions that can occur (they are organized by namespace). If you expand any namespace, you can see the individual exceptions that are available, and you can select each of them individually.

## Throwing exceptions

Suppose that you are implementing a method called *monthName* that accepts a single *int* argument and returns the name of the corresponding month. For example, *monthName(1)* returns “January”, *monthName(2)* returns “February”, and so on. The question is, what should the method return if the integer argument is less than 1 or greater than 12? The best answer is that the method shouldn’t return anything at all—it should throw an exception. The .NET Framework class libraries contain lots of exception classes specifically designed for situations such as this. Most of the time, you will find that one of these classes describes your exceptional condition. (If not, you can easily create your own exception class, but you need to know a bit more about the C# language before you can do that.) In this case, the existing .NET Framework *ArgumentOutOfRangeException* class is just right. You can throw an exception by using the *throw* statement, as shown in the following example:

```
public static string monthName(int month)
{
    switch (month)
    {
        case 1 :
            return "January";
        case 2 :
            return "February";
        ...
        case 12 :
            return "December";
        default :
            throw new ArgumentOutOfRangeException("Bad month");
    }
}
```

The *throw* statement needs an exception object to throw. This object contains the details of the exception, including any error messages. This example uses an

expression that creates a new *ArgumentOutOfRangeException* object. The object is initialized with a string that populates its *Message* property by using a constructor. Constructors are covered in detail in [Chapter 7](#).

In the following exercises, you will modify the MathsOperators project to throw an exception if the user attempts to perform a calculation without specifying an operator.

#### NOTE

This exercise is a little contrived, as any good application design would provide a default operator, but this application is intended to illustrate a point.

#### Throw an exception

1. Return to Visual Studio 2013.
2. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
3. In the Left Operand box, type **24**; in the Right Operand box, type **36**; and then click Calculate.

Nothing appears in the Expression and Result boxes. The fact that you have not selected an operator option is not immediately obvious. It would be useful to write a diagnostic message in the Result box.

4. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.
5. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying *MainWindow.xaml.cs*, locate and examine the *calculateClick* method, which should look like this:

```
private int calculateClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        if ((bool)addition.IsChecked)
        {
            addValues();
        }
        else if ((bool)subtraction.IsChecked)
        {
```



```

        subtractValues();
    }
    else if ((bool)multiplication.IsChecked)
    {
        multiplyValues();
    }
    else if ((bool)division.IsChecked)
    {
        divideValues();
    }
    else if ((bool)remainder.IsChecked)
    {
        remainderValues();
    }
}
catch (FormatException fEx)
{
    result.Text = fEx.Message;
}
catch (OverflowException oEx)
{
    result.Text = oEx.Message;
}
}

```

The *addition*, *subtraction*, *multiplication*, *division*, and *remainder* fields are the buttons that appear on the form. Each button has a property called *IsChecked* that indicates whether the user has selected it. The *IsChecked* property is a nullable Boolean that has the value *true* if the button is selected or *false* otherwise (you learn more about nullable values in [Chapter 8](#)). The cascading *if* statement examines each button in turn to find which one is selected. (The radio buttons are mutually exclusive, so the user can select only one radio button at most.) If none of the buttons is selected, none of the *if* statements will be true and none of the calculation methods is called.

You could try to solve the problem by adding one more *else* statement to the *if-else* cascade to write a message to the *result* text box on the form, but a better solution is to separate the detection and signaling of an error from the catching and handling of that error.

6. Add another *else* statement to the end of the list of *if-else* statements and

throw an *InvalidOperationException* as follows, in bold:

```
if ((bool)addition.IsChecked)
{
    addValues();
}
...
else if ((bool)remainder.IsChecked)
{
    remainderValues();
}
else
{
    throw new InvalidOperationException("No operator selected");
}
```

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
8. In the Left Operand box, type **24**; in the Right Operand box, type **36**; and then click Calculate.

Visual Studio detects that your application has thrown an *InvalidOperationException* exception, and an exception dialog box opens. Your application has thrown an exception, but the code does not catch it yet.

9. On the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.

Now that you have written a *throw* statement and verified that it throws an exception, you will write a *catch* handler to handle this exception.

Catch the exception

1. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying MainWindow.xaml.cs, add the following *catch* handler shown in bold immediately below the existing two *catch* handlers in the *calculateClick* method:

```
...
catch (FormatException fEx)
{
    result.Text = fEx.Message;
}
catch (OverflowException oEx)
```

```
{  
    result.Text = oEx.Message;  
}  
catch (InvalidOperationException ioEx)  
{  
    result.Text = ioEx.Message;  
}
```

This code catches the *InvalidOperationException* that is thrown when no operator button is selected.

2. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
3. in the Left Operand box, type **24**; in the Right Operand box, type **36**; and then click Calculate.

The message “No operator selected” appears in the Result box.

#### NOTE

If you drop into the Visual Studio Debugger, you have probably enabled Visual Studio to catch exceptions as they are thrown, as described earlier. If this happens, on the Debug menu, click Continue. Remember to disable Visual Studio from catching CLR exceptions as they are thrown when you have finished this exercise!

4. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

The application is now a lot more robust. However, several exceptions could still arise that are not caught and will cause the application to fail. For example, if you attempt to divide by 0, an unhandled *DivideByZeroException* will be thrown. (Integer division by 0 does throw an exception, unlike floating-point division by 0.) One way to solve this problem is to write an ever larger number of *catch* handlers inside the *calculateClick* method. Another solution is to add a general *catch* handler that catches *Exception* at the end of the list of *catch* handlers. This will trap all unexpected exceptions that you might have forgotten about or that might be caused as a result of truly unusual circumstances.

#### NOTE

Using a catchall handler to trap the *Exception* exception is not an excuse to omit catching specific exceptions. The more definite you can be in your exception handling, the easier it will be to maintain your code and spot the causes of any underlying or commonly recurring issues. Only use the *Exception* exception for cases that are really... well, exceptional. For the purposes of the following exercise, the “divide by zero” exception falls into this category. However, having established that this exception is a distinct possibility in a professional application, good practice would be to add a handler for the *DivideByZeroException* exception to the application.

## Catch unhandled exceptions

1. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying `MainWindow.xaml.cs`, add the following *catch* handler to the end of the list of existing *catch* handlers in the *calculateClick* method:

```
catch (Exception ex)
{
    result.Text = ex.Message;
}
```

This *catch* handler will catch all hitherto unhandled exceptions, whatever their specific type.

2. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

You will now attempt to perform some calculations known to cause exceptions and confirm that they are all handled correctly.

3. In the Left Operand box, type **24**; in the Right Operand box, type **36**; and then click Calculate.

Confirm that the diagnostic message “No operator selected” still appears in the Result box. This message was generated by the *InvalidOperationException* handler.

4. In the Left Operand box, type **John**, click the + Addition button, and then click Calculate.

Confirm that the diagnostic message “Input string was not in a correct format” appears in the Result box. This message was generated by the *FormatException* handler.

5. In the Left Operand box, type **24**; in the Right Operand box, type **0**; click the / Division button; and then click Calculate.

Confirm that the diagnostic message “Attempted to divide by zero” appears in the Result box. This message was generated by the general *Exception* handler.

6. Experiment with other combinations of values, and verify that exception conditions are handled without causing the application to fail. When you have finished, return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Using a *finally* block

It is important to remember that when an exception is thrown, it changes the flow of execution through the program. This means that you can’t guarantee a statement will always run when the previous statement finishes because the previous statement might throw an exception. Remember that in this case, after the *catch* handler has run, the flow of control resumes at the next statement in the block holding this handler and not at the statement immediately following the code that raised the exception.

Look at the example that follows, which is adapted from the code in [Chapter 5](#). It’s very easy to assume that the call to *reader.Dispose* will always occur when the *while* loop completes (if you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, you can replace *reader.Dispose* with *reader.Close* in this example). After all, it’s right there in the code.

```
TextReader reader = ...;
...
string line = reader.ReadLine();
while (line != null)
{
    ...
    line = reader.ReadLine();
}
reader.Dispose();
```

Sometimes it’s not an issue if one particular statement does not run, but on many occasions it can be a big problem. If the statement releases a resource that was

acquired in a previous statement, failing to execute this statement results in the resource being retained. This example is just such a case: when you open a file for reading, this operation acquires a resource (a file handle), and you must ensure that you call *reader.Dispose* to release the resource (*reader.Close* actually calls *reader.Dispose* in Windows 7 and Windows 8 to do this). If you don't, sooner or later you'll run out of file handles and be unable to open more files. If you find file handles are too trivial, think of database connections, instead.

The way to ensure that a statement is always run, whether or not an exception has been thrown, is to write that statement inside a *finally* block. A *finally* block occurs immediately after a *try* block or immediately after the last *catch* handler after a *try* block. As long as the program enters the *try* block associated with a *finally* block, the *finally* block will always be run, even if an exception occurs. If an exception is thrown and caught locally, the exception handler executes first, followed by the *finally* block. If the exception is not caught locally (that is, the runtime has to search through the list of calling methods to find a handler), the *finally* block runs first. In any case, the *finally* block always executes.

The solution to the *reader.Close* problem is as follows:

```
TextReader reader = ...;
...
try
{
    string line = reader.ReadLine();
    while (line != null)
    {
        ...
        line = reader.ReadLine();
    }
}
finally
{
    if (reader != null)
    {
        reader.Dispose();
    }
}
```

Even if an exception occurs while reading the file, the *finally* block ensures that

the *reader.Dispose* statement always executes. You'll see another way to handle this situation in [Chapter 14](#).

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to catch and handle exceptions by using the *try* and *catch* constructs. You saw how to turn on and off integer overflow checking by using the *checked* and *unchecked* keywords. You learned how to throw an exception if your code detects an exceptional situation, and you saw how to use a *finally* block to ensure that critical code always runs, even if an exception occurs.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 7](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Catch a specific exception	Write a catch handler that catches the specific exception class. For example:  <pre>try {     ... } catch (FormatException fEx) {     ... }</pre>
Ensure that integer arithmetic is always checked for overflow	Use the checked keyword. For example:  <pre>int number = Int32.MaxValue; checked {</pre>

	<pre>        number++;     }</pre>
Throw an exception	<p>Use a throw statement. For example:</p> <pre>    throw new FormatException(source);</pre>
Catch all exceptions in a single catch handler	<p>Write a catch handler that catches Exception. For example:</p> <pre>    try     {         ...     }     catch (Exception ex)     {         ...     }</pre>
Ensure that some code will always run, even if an exception is thrown	<p>Write the code within a finally block. For example:</p> <pre>    try     {         ...     }     finally     {         // always run     }</pre>



# Part II. Understanding the C# object model

---

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

Chapter 9

Chapter 10

Chapter 11

Chapter 12

Chapter 13

Chapter 14

# Chapter 7. Creating and managing classes and objects

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Defining and using a class
- Controlling accessibility
- Creating a *static* field by using the *const* keyword
- Write and call your own constructors.
- Understanding static methods and data
- Anonymous classes

The Microsoft Windows Runtime for Windows 8 and Windows 8.1, together with the Microsoft .NET Framework available on Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1 contain thousands of classes, and you have used a number of them already, including *Console* and *Exception*. Classes provide a convenient mechanism for modeling the entities manipulated by applications. An *entity* can represent a specific item, such as a customer, or something more abstract, such as a transaction. Part of the design process of any system focuses on determining the entities that are important to the processes that the system implements and then performing an analysis to see what information these entities need to hold and what operations they should perform. You store the information that a class holds as fields and use methods to implement the operations that a class can perform.

## Understanding classification

*Class* is the root word of the term *classification*. When you design a class, you systematically arrange information and behavior into a meaningful entity. This arranging is an act of classification and is something that everyone does—not just programmers. For example, all cars share common behaviors (they can be steered, stopped, accelerated, and so on) and common attributes (they have a steering wheel, an engine, and so on). People use the word *car* to mean an object that shares these common behaviors and attributes. As long as everyone agrees on what a word means, this system works well and you can express complex but precise ideas in a concise form. Without classification, it's hard to imagine how people could think or communicate at all.

Given that classification is so deeply ingrained in the way we think and communicate, it makes sense to try to write programs by classifying the different concepts inherent in a problem and its solution and then modeling these classes in a programming language. This is exactly what you can do with modern object-oriented programming languages, such as Microsoft Visual C#.

## The purpose of encapsulation

*Encapsulation* is an important principle when defining classes. The idea is that a program that uses a class should not have to worry how that class actually works internally; the program simply creates an instance of a class and calls the methods of that class. As long as those methods do what they say they will do, the program does not care how they are implemented. For example, when you call the *Console.WriteLine* method, you don't want to be bothered with all the intricate details of how the *Console* class physically arranges for data to be written to the screen. A class might need to maintain all sorts of internal state information to perform its various methods. This additional state information and activity is hidden from the program that is using the class. Therefore, encapsulation is sometimes referred to as information hiding. Encapsulation actually has two purposes:

- To combine methods and data within a class; in other words, to support classification
- To control the accessibility of the methods and data; in other words, to control the use of the class

## Defining and using a class

In C#, you use the *class* keyword to define a new class. The data and methods of the class occur in the body of the class between a pair of braces. Following is a C# class called *Circle* that contains one method (to calculate the circle's area) and one piece of data (the circle's radius):

```
class Circle
{
    int radius;
    double Area()
    {
        return Math.PI * radius * radius;
    }
}
```

### NOTE

The *Math* class contains methods for performing mathematical calculations and fields containing mathematical constants. The *Math.PI* field contains the value 3.14159265358979323846, which is an approximation of the value of pi.

The body of a class contains ordinary methods (such as *Area*) and fields (such as *radius*). Recall from early on in the book that variables in a class are called *fields*. [Chapter 2](#) shows how to declare variables, [Chapter 3](#) demonstrates how to write methods, so there's almost no new syntax here.

You can use the *Circle* class in a similar manner to using the other types that you have already met. You create a variable specifying *Circle* as its type, and then you initialize the variable with some valid data. Here is an example:

```
Circle c;           // Create a Circle variable
c = new Circle();   // Initialize it
```

A point worth highlighting in this code is the use of the *new* keyword. Previously, when you initialized a variable such as an *int* or a *float*, you simply assigned it a value:

```
int i;
i = 42;
```

You cannot do the same with variables of class types. One reason for this is that C# just doesn't provide the syntax for assigning literal class values to variables. You cannot write a statement such as this:

```
Circle c;  
c = 42;
```

After all, what is the *Circle* equivalent of 42? Another reason concerns the way in which memory for variables of class types is allocated and managed by the runtime—this is discussed further in [Chapter 8](#). For now, just accept that the *new* keyword creates a new instance of a class, more commonly called an *object*.

You can, however, directly assign an instance of a class to another variable of the same type, like this:

```
Circle c;  
c = new Circle();  
Circle d;  
d = c;
```

However, this is not as straightforward as it first appears, for reasons that are described in [Chapter 8](#).

#### IMPORTANT

Don't confuse the terms *class* and *object*. A class is the definition of a type. An object is an instance of that type, created when the program runs. Several objects can be instances of the same class.

## Controlling accessibility

Surprisingly, the *Circle* class is currently of no practical use. By default, when you encapsulate your methods and data within a class, the class forms a boundary to the outside world. Fields (such as *radius*) and methods (such as *Area*) defined in the class can be seen by other methods inside the class but not by the outside world; they are private to the class. So, although you can create a

*Circle* object in a program, you cannot access its *radius* field or call its *Area* method, which is why the class is not of much use—yet! However, you can modify the definition of a field or method with the *public* and *private* keywords to control whether it is accessible from the outside:

- A method or field is private if it is accessible only from within the class. To declare that a method or field is private, you write the keyword *private* before its declaration. As intimated previously, this is actually the default, but it is good practice to state explicitly that fields and methods are private to avoid any confusion.
- A method or field is public if it is accessible from both within and outside of the class. To declare that a method or field is public, you write the keyword *public* before its declaration.

Here is the *Circle* class again. This time, *Area* is declared as a public method and *radius* is declared as a private field:

```
class Circle
{
    private int radius;
    public double Area()
    {
        return Math.PI * radius * radius;
    }
}
```

#### NOTE

If you are a C++ programmer, be aware that there is no colon after the *public* and *private* keywords. You must repeat the keyword for every field and method declaration.

Although *radius* is declared as a private field and is not accessible from outside the class, *radius* is accessible from within the *Circle* class. The *Area* method is inside the *Circle* class, so the body of *Area* has access to *radius*. However, the class is still of limited value because there is no way of initializing the *radius* field. To fix this, you can use a constructor.

### TIP

Unlike variables declared in a method that are not initialized by default, the fields in a class are automatically initialized to *0*, *false*, or *null*, depending on their type. However, it is still good practice to provide an explicit means of initializing fields.

**NAMING AND ACCESSIBILITY** MANY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE THEIR OWN HOUSE-STYLE THAT THEY ASK DEVELOPERS TO FOLLOW WHEN WRITING CODE. PART OF THIS STYLE TYPICALLY INVOLVES RULES FOR NAMING IDENTIFIERS, AND THE PURPOSE OF THESE RULES IS TYPICALLY TO ASSIST IN THE MAINTAINABILITY OF THE CODE. THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE REASONABLY COMMON AND RELATE TO THE NAMING CONVENTIONS FOR FIELDS AND METHODS BASED ON THE ACCESSIBILITY OF CLASS MEMBERS; HOWEVER, C# DOES NOT ENFORCE THESE RULES:

- IDENTIFIERS THAT ARE *PUBLIC* SHOULD START WITH A CAPITAL LETTER. FOR EXAMPLE, *AREA* STARTS WITH *A* (NOT *a*) BECAUSE IT'S *PUBLIC*. THIS SYSTEM IS KNOWN AS THE *PASCALCASE* NAMING SCHEME (BECAUSE IT WAS FIRST USED IN THE PASCAL LANGUAGE).
- IDENTIFIERS THAT ARE NOT *PUBLIC* (WHICH INCLUDE LOCAL VARIABLES) SHOULD START WITH A LOWERCASE LETTER. FOR EXAMPLE, *RADIUS* STARTS WITH *r* (NOT *R*) BECAUSE IT'S *PRIVATE*. THIS SYSTEM IS KNOWN AS THE *CAMELCASE* NAMING SCHEME.

### NOTE

Some organizations use camelCase only for methods and adopt the convention that private fields are named starting with an initial underscore character, such as *\_radius*. However, the examples in this book use camelCase for private methods and fields.

There's only one exception to this rule: class names should start with a capital letter, and constructors must match the name of their class exactly; therefore, a *private* constructor must start with a capital letter.

### IMPORTANT

Don't declare two *public* class members whose names differ only in case. If you do, developers using other languages that are not case sensitive (such as Microsoft Visual Basic) might not be able to integrate your class into their solutions.

## Working with constructors

When you use the *new* keyword to create an object, the runtime needs to construct that object by using the definition of the class. The runtime must grab a piece of memory from the operating system, fill it with the fields defined by the class, and then invoke a constructor to perform any initialization required.

A *constructor* is a special method that runs automatically when you create an instance of a class. It has the same name as the class, and it can take parameters, but it cannot return a value (not even *void*). Every class must have a constructor. If you don't write one, the compiler automatically generates a default constructor for you. (However, the compiler-generated default constructor doesn't actually do anything.) You can write your own default constructor quite easily. Just add a public method that does not return a value and give it the same name as the class. The following example shows the *Circle* class with a default constructor that initializes the *radius* field to 0:

```
class Circle
{
    private int radius;
    public Circle() // default constructor
    {
        radius = 0;
    }
    public double Area()
    {
        return Math.PI * radius * radius;
    }
}
```

### NOTE

In C# parlance, the *default* constructor is a constructor that does not take any parameters. It does not matter whether the compiler generates it or you write it, it is still the default constructor. You can also write nondefault constructors (constructors that *do* take parameters), as you will see in the upcoming section [Overloading constructors](#)

In this example, the constructor is marked as *public*. If this keyword is omitted, the constructor will be private (just like any other methods and fields). If the constructor is private, it cannot be used outside the class, which prevents you



from being able to create *Circle* objects from methods that are not part of the *Circle* class. You might therefore think that private constructors are not that valuable. They do have their uses, but they are beyond the scope of the current discussion.

Having added a public constructor, you can now use the *Circle* class and exercise its *Area* method. Notice how you use dot notation to invoke the *Area* method on a *Circle* object:

```
Circle c;  
c = new Circle();  
double areaOfCircle = c.Area();
```

## Overloading constructors

You're almost finished, but not quite. You can now declare a *Circle* variable, use it to reference a newly created *Circle* object, and then call its *Area* method. However, there is one last problem. The area of all *Circle* objects will always be 0 because the default constructor sets the radius to 0 and it stays at 0; the *radius* field is private, and there is no easy way of changing its value after it has been initialized. A constructor is just a special kind of method and it—like all methods—can be overloaded. Just as there are several versions of the *Console.WriteLine* method, each of which takes different parameters, so too can you write different versions of a constructor. So, you can add another constructor to the *Circle* class, with a parameter that specifies the radius to use, like this:

```
class Circle  
{  
    private int radius;  
    public Circle() // default constructor  
    {  
        radius = 0;  
    }  
    public Circle(int initialRadius) // overloaded constructor  
    {  
        radius = initialRadius;  
    }  
    public double Area()  
    {  
        return Math.PI * radius * radius;  
    }  
}
```

}

#### NOTE

The order of the constructors in a class is immaterial; you can define constructors in whatever order with which you feel most comfortable.

You can then use this constructor when creating a new *Circle* object, such as in the following:

```
Circle c;  
c = new Circle(45);
```

When you build the application, the compiler works out which constructor it should call based on the parameters that you specify to the *new* operator. In this example, you passed an *int*, so the compiler generates code that invokes the constructor that takes an *int* parameter.

You should be aware of an important feature of the C# language: If you write your own constructor for a class, the compiler does not generate a default constructor. Therefore, if you've written your own constructor that accepts one or more parameters and you also want a default constructor, you'll have to write the default constructor yourself.

**PARTIAL CLASSES A CLASS CAN CONTAIN A NUMBER OF METHODS, FIELDS, AND CONSTRUCTORS, AS WELL AS OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED IN LATER CHAPTERS. A HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL CLASS CAN BECOME QUITE LARGE. WITH C#, YOU CAN SPLIT THE SOURCE CODE FOR A CLASS INTO SEPARATE FILES SO THAT YOU CAN ORGANIZE THE DEFINITION OF A LARGE CLASS INTO SMALLER, EASIER TO MANAGE PIECES. THIS FEATURE IS USED BY MICROSOFT VISUAL STUDIO 2013 FOR WINDOWS PRESENTATION FOUNDATION (WPF) AND WINDOWS STORE APPS, WHERE THE SOURCE CODE THAT THE DEVELOPER CAN EDIT IS MAINTAINED IN A SEPARATE FILE FROM THE CODE THAT IS GENERATED BY VISUAL STUDIO WHENEVER THE LAYOUT OF A FORM CHANGES.**

**WHEN YOU SPLIT A CLASS ACROSS MULTIPLE FILES, YOU DEFINE THE PARTS OF THE CLASS BY USING THE *PARTIAL* KEYWORD IN EACH FILE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE *CIRCLE* CLASS IS SPLIT BETWEEN TWO FILES CALLED CIRC1.CS (CONTAINING THE CONSTRUCTORS) AND CIRC2.CS (CONTAINING THE METHODS AND FIELDS), THE CONTENTS OF CIRC1.CS**

## LOOK LIKE THIS:

```
PARTIAL CLASS CIRCLE
{
    PUBLIC CIRCLE() // DEFAULT CONSTRUCTOR
    {
        THIS.RADIUS = 0;
    }
    PUBLIC CIRCLE(INT INITIALRADIUS) // OVERLOADED CONSTRUCTOR
    {
        THIS.RADIUS = INITIALRADIUS;
    }
}
```

## THE CONTENTS OF CIRC2.CS LOOK LIKE THIS:

```
PARTIAL CLASS CIRCLE
{
    PRIVATE INT RADIUS;
    PUBLIC DOUBLE AREA()
    {
        RETURN MATH.PI THIS.RADIUS THIS.RADIUS;
    }
}
```

## WHEN YOU COMPILE A CLASS THAT HAS BEEN SPLIT INTO SEPARATE FILES, YOU MUST PROVIDE ALL THE FILES TO THE COMPILER.

In the following exercise, you will declare a class that models a point in two-dimensional space. The class will contain two private fields for holding the x and y-coordinates of a point and will provide constructors for initializing these fields. You will create instances of the class by using the *new* keyword and calling the constructors.

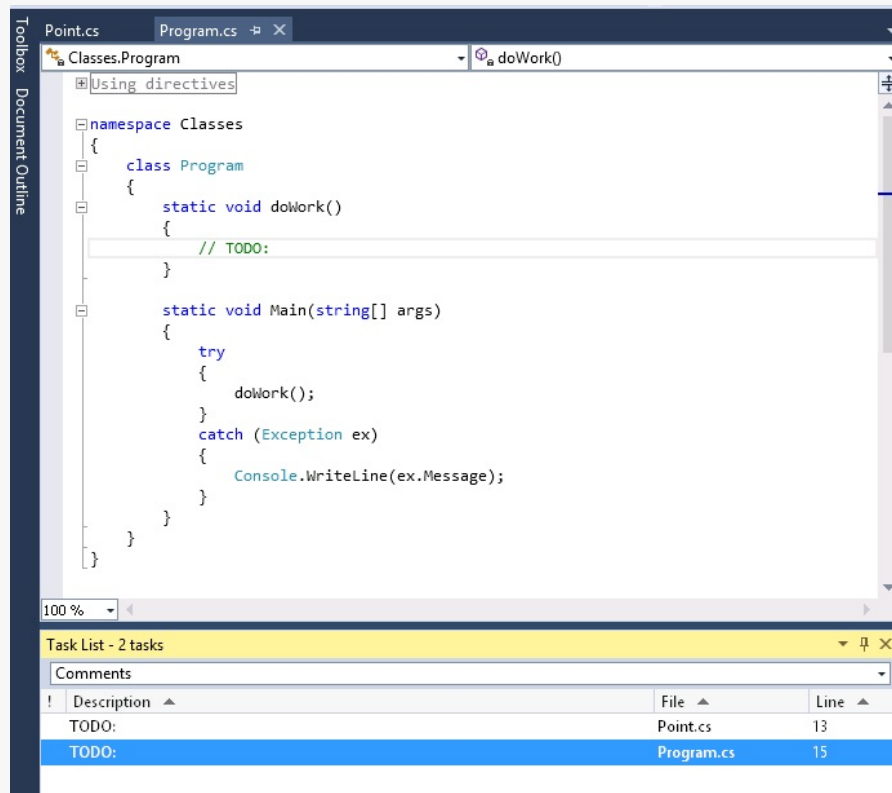
Write constructors and create objects

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Classes project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 7\Windows X\Classes folder in your Documents folder.
3. In Solution Explorer, double-click the file Program.cs to display it in the Code and Text Editor window.
4. In the *Program* class, locate the *Main* method.

The *Main* method calls the *doWork* method, wrapped in a *try* block and followed by a *catch* handler. With this *try/catch* block, you can write the code that would typically go inside *Main* in the *doWork* method, instead, safe in the knowledge that it will catch and handle any exceptions. The *doWork* method currently contains nothing but a *// TODO:* comment.

## TIP

TODO comments are frequently used by developers as a reminder that they have left a piece of code to revisit, and they frequently have a description of the work to be performed, such as *// TODO: Implement the doWork method*. Visual Studio recognizes this form of comment, and you can quickly locate them anywhere in an application by using the Task List window. To display this window, on the View menu, click Task List. The Task List window opens below the Code and Text Editor window by default. In the drop-down list box at the top of this window, select Comments. All of the TODO comments will be listed. You can then double-click any of these comments to go directly to the corresponding code, which will be displayed in the Code and Text Editor window.



5. Display the file Point.cs in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file defines a class called *Point*, which you will use to represent the location of a point in two-dimensional space, defined by a pair of x and y-coordinates. The *Point* class is currently empty apart from another *// TODO:* comment.

6. Return to the Program.cs file. In the *Program* class, edit the body of the *doWork* method, and replace the *// TODO:* comment with the following statement:

**Point origin = new Point();**

This statement creates a new instance of the *Point* class and invokes its default constructor.

7. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

The code builds without error because the compiler automatically generates the code for a default constructor for the *Point* class. However, you cannot see the C# code for this constructor because the compiler does not generate any source language statements.

8. Return to the *Point* class in the file *Point.cs*. Replace the *// TODO:* comment with a *public* constructor that accepts two *int* arguments called *x* and *y* and that calls the *Console.WriteLine* method to display the values of these arguments to the console, as shown in bold type in the following code example:

```
class Point
{
    public Point(int x, int y)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("x:{0}, y:{1}", x, y);
    }
}
```

#### NOTE

Remember that the *Console.WriteLine* method uses *{0}* and *{1}* as placeholders. In the statement shown, *{0}* will be replaced with the value of *x*, and *{1}* will be replaced with the value of *y* when the program runs.

9. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

The compiler now reports an error:

```
'Classes.Point' does not contain a constructor that takes 0 arguments
```

The call to the default constructor in the *doWork* method is now invalid because there is no longer a default constructor. You have written your own constructor for the *Point* class, so the compiler does not generate the default constructor. You will now fix this by writing your own default constructor.

10. Edit the *Point* class by adding a *public* default constructor that calls *Console.WriteLine* to write the string “*Default constructor called*” to the console, as shown in bold type in the example that follows. The *Point* class should now look like this:

```
class Point
{
    public Point()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Default constructor called");
    }
    public Point(int x, int y)
```

```

    {
        Console.WriteLine("x:{0}, y:{1}", x, y);
    }
}

```

11. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

The program should now build successfully.

12. In the Program.cs file, edit the body of the *doWork* method. Declare a variable called *bottomRight* of type *Point*, and initialize it to a new *Point* object by using the constructor with two arguments, as shown in bold type in the code that follows. Supply the values 1366 and 768, representing the coordinates at the lower-right corner of the screen based on the resolution 1366 × 768 (a common resolution for many Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 tablet devices). The *doWork* method should now look like this:

```

static void doWork()
{
    Point origin = new Point();
    Point bottomRight = new Point(1366, 768);
}

```

13. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program builds and runs, displaying the following messages to the console:



The screenshot shows a Windows command prompt window with the title bar "C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe". The command prompt icon is visible in the top-left corner. The text displayed in the window is:

```

Default constructor called
x:1366, y:768
Press any key to continue . . . _

```

- Press the Enter key to end the program and return to Visual Studio 2013.

You will now add two *int* fields to the *Point* class to represent the x and y-coordinates of a point, and you will modify the constructors to initialize these fields

- Edit the *Point* class in the Point.cs file by adding two *private* fields called *x* and *y* of type *int*, as shown in bold type in the code that follows. The *Point* class should now look like this:

```

class Point
{
    private int x, y;
    public Point()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("default constructor called");
    }
    public Point(int x, int y)
    {

```

```

        Console.WriteLine("x:{0}, y:{1}", x, y);
    }
}

```

You will edit the second *Point* constructor to initialize the *x* and *y* fields to the values of the *x* and *y* parameters. There is a potential trap when you do this. If you are not careful, the constructor will look like this:

```

public Point(int x, int y) // Don't type this!
{
    x = x;
    y = y;
}

```

Although this code will compile, these statements appear to be ambiguous. How does the compiler know in the statement *x = x*; that the first *x* is the field and the second *x* is the parameter? The answer is that it doesn't! A method parameter with the same name as a field hides the field for all statements in the method. All this code actually does is assign the parameters to themselves; it does not modify the fields at all. This is clearly not what you want.

The solution is to use the *this* keyword to qualify which variables are parameters and which are fields. Prefixing a variable with *this* means “the field in this object.”

- Modify the *Point* constructor that takes two parameters by replacing the *Console.WriteLine* statement with the following code shown in bold type:

```

public Point(int x, int y)
{
    this.x = x;
    this.y = y;
}

```

- Edit the default *Point* constructor to initialize the *x* and *y* fields to *-1*, as follows in bold type. Note that although there are no parameters to cause confusion, it is still good practice to qualify the field references with *this*:

```

public Point()
{
    this.x = -1;
    this.y = -1;
}

```

- On the Build menu, click Build Solution. Confirm that the code compiles without errors or warnings. (You can run it, but it does not produce any output yet.)

Methods that belong to a class and that operate on the data belonging to a

particular instance of a class are called *instance methods*. (You will learn about other types of methods later in this chapter.) In the following exercise, you will write an instance method for the *Point* class, called *DistanceTo*, which calculates the distance between two points.

Write and call instance methods

1. In the Classes project in Visual Studio 2013, add the following public instance method called *DistanceTo* to the *Point* class after the constructors. The method accepts a single *Point* argument called *other* and returns a *double*.

The *DistanceTo* method should look like this:

```
class Point
{
    ...
    public double DistanceTo(Point other)
    {
    }
}
```

In the following steps, you will add code to the body of the *DistanceTo* instance method to calculate and return the distance between the *Point* object being used to make the call and the *Point* object passed as a parameter. To do this, you must calculate the difference between the x-coordinates and the y-coordinates.

2. In the *DistanceTo* method, declare a local *int* variable called *xDiff* and initialize it with the difference between *this.x* and *other.x*, as shown below in bold type:

```
public double DistanceTo(Point other)
{
    int xDiff = this.x - other.x;
}
```

3. Declare another local *int* variable called *yDiff* and initialize it with the difference between *this.y* and *other.y*, as shown here in bold type:

```
public double DistanceTo(Point other)
```



```

{
    int xDiff = this.x - other.x;
    int yDiff = this.y - other.y;
}

```

#### NOTE

Although the *x* and *y* fields are private, other instances of the same class can still access them. It is important to understand that the term *private* operates at the class level and not at the object level; two objects that are instances of the same class can access each other's private data, but objects that are instances of another class cannot.

To calculate the distance, you can use the Pythagorean theorem and calculate the square root of the sum of the square of *xDiff* and the square of *yDiff*. The *System.Math* class provides the *Sqrt* method that you can use to calculate square roots.

4. Declare a variable called *distance* of type *double* and use it to hold the result of the calculation just described.

```

public double DistanceTo(Point other)
{
    int xDiff = this.x - other.x;
    int yDiff = this.y - other.y;
    double distance = Math.Sqrt((xDiff * xDiff) + (yDiff * yDiff));
}

```

5. Add the *return* statement to the end of the *DistanceTo* method and return the value in the *distance* variable:

```

public double DistanceTo(Point other)
{
    int xDiff = this.x - other.x;
    int yDiff = this.y - other.y;
    double distance = Math.Sqrt((xDiff * xDiff) + (yDiff * yDiff));
    return distance;
}

```

You will now test the *DistanceTo* method.

- Return to the *doWork* method in the *Program* class. After the statements that declare and initialize the *origin* and *bottomRight* *Point* variables, declare a variable called *distance* of type *double*. Initialize this *double* variable with the result obtained when you call the *DistanceTo* method on the *origin* object, passing the *bottomRight* object to it as an argument.

The *doWork* method should now look like this:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Point origin = new Point();
    Point bottomRight = new Point(1366, 768);
    double distance = origin.DistanceTo(bottomRight);
}
```

#### NOTE

Microsoft IntelliSense should display the *DistanceTo* method when you type the period character after *origin*.

- Add another statement to the *doWork* method that writes the value of the *distance* variable to the console by using the *Console.WriteLine* method.

The completed *doWork* method should look like this:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Point origin = new Point();
    Point bottomRight = new Point(1366, 768);
    double distance = origin.DistanceTo(bottomRight);
    Console.WriteLine("Distance is: {0}", distance);
}
```

- On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.
- Confirm that the value 1568.45465347265 is written to the console window and then press Enter to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Understanding static methods and data

## Understanding Static Methods and Data

In the preceding exercise, you used the *Sqrt* method of the *Math* class. Similarly, when looking at the *Circle* class, you read the *PI* field of the *Math* class. If you think about it, the way in which you called the *Sqrt* method or read the *PI* field was slightly odd. You invoked the method or read the field on the class itself, not on an object of type *Math*. It is like trying to write *Point.DistanceTo* rather than *origin.DistanceTo* in the code you added in the preceding exercise. So what's happening, and how does this work?

You will often find that not all methods naturally belong to an instance of a class; they are utility methods inasmuch as they provide a useful function that is independent of any specific class instance. The *Sqrt* method is just such an example. If *Sqrt* were an instance method of *Math*, you'd have to create a *Math* object on which to call *Sqrt*:

```
Math m = new Math();  
double d = m.Sqrt(42.24);
```

This would be cumbersome. The *Math* object would play no part in the calculation of the square root. All the input data that *Sqrt* needs is provided in the parameter list, and the result is passed back to the caller by using the method's return value. Objects are not really needed here, so forcing *Sqrt* into an instance straitjacket is just not a good idea.

### NOTE

As well as containing the *Sqrt* method and the *PI* field, the *Math* class contains many other mathematical utility methods, such as *Sin*, *Cos*, *Tan*, and *Log*.

In C#, all methods must be declared within a class. However, if you declare a method or a field as *static*, you can call the method or access the field by using the name of the class. No instance is required. This is how the *Sqrt* method of the *Math* class is declared:

```
class Math  
{  
    public static double Sqrt(double d)  
    {
```

```

    ~
    ...
}
    ...
}

```

A static method does not depend on an instance of the class, and it cannot access any instance fields or instance methods defined in the class; it can use only fields and other methods that are marked as *static*.

## Creating a shared field

Defining a field as static makes it possible for you to create a single instance of a field that is shared among all objects created from a single class. (Nonstatic fields are local to each instance of an object.) In the following example, the *static* field *NumCircles* in the *Circle* class is incremented by the *Circle* constructor every time a new *Circle* object is created:

```

class Circle
{
    private int radius;
    public static int NumCircles = 0;
    public Circle() // default constructor
    {
        radius = 0;
        NumCircles++;
    }
    public Circle(int initialRadius) // overloaded constructor
    {
        radius = initialRadius;
        NumCircles++;
    }
}

```

All *Circle* objects share the same instance of the *NumCircles* field, so the statement *NumCircles++*; increments the same data every time a new instance is created. Notice that you cannot prefix *NumCircles* with the *this* keyword, as *NumCircles* does not belong to a specific object.

You can access the *NumCircles* field from outside of the class by specifying the *Circle* class rather than a *Circle* object, such as in the following example:

```

Console.WriteLine("Number of Circle objects: {0}" Circle.NumCircles);

```

const int MAX\_ELEMENTS = 100; // static member variable

#### NOTE

Keep in mind that *static* methods are also called *class* methods. However, *static* fields aren't usually called *class* fields; they're just called *static* fields (or sometimes *static* variables).

## Creating a *static* field by using the *const* keyword

By prefixing the field with the *const* keyword, you can declare that a field is static but that its value can never change. The keyword *const* is short for *constant*. A *const* field does not use the *static* keyword in its declaration but is nevertheless static. However, for reasons that are beyond the scope of this book, you can declare a field as *const* only when the field is a numeric type (such as *int* or *double*), a string, or an enumeration (you will learn about enumerations in [Chapter 9](#)). For example, here's how the *Math* class declares *PI* as a *const* field:

```
class Math
{
    ...
    public const double PI = 3.14159265358979323846;
}
```

## Understanding *static* classes

Another feature of the C# language is the ability to declare a class as *static*. A *static* class can contain only *static* members. (All objects that you create by using the class share a single copy of these members.) The purpose of a *static* class is purely to act as a holder of utility methods and fields. A *static* class cannot contain any instance data or methods, and it does not make sense to try to create an object from a *static* class by using the *new* operator. In fact, you can't actually create an instance of an object using a *static* class by using *new* even if you want to. (The compiler will report an error if you try.) If you need to perform any initialization, a *static* class can have a default constructor as long as it is also declared as *static*. Any other types of constructor are illegal and will be reported as such by the compiler.

If you were defining your own version of the *Math* class, one containing only *static* members, it could look like this:

```
public static class Math
{
    public static double Sin(double x) {...}
    public static double Cos(double x) {...}
    public static double Sqrt(double x) {...}
    ...
}
```

#### NOTE

The real *Math* class is not defined this way because it actually does have some instance methods.

In the final exercise in this chapter, you will add a *private static* field to the *Point* class and initialize the field to 0. You will increment this count in both constructors. Finally, you will write a *public static* method to return the value of this *private static* field. With this field, you can find out how many *Point* objects you have created.

Write *static* members and call *static* methods

1. In Visual Studio 2013, display the *Point* class in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add a *private static* field called *objectCount* of type *int* to the *Point* class immediately before the constructors. Initialize it to 0 as you declare it, like this:

```
class Point
{
    ...
    private static int objectCount = 0;
    ...
}
```

#### NOTE

You can write the keywords *private* and *static* in any order when you declare a field such as *objectCount*. However, the preferred order is *private* first, *static* second.

3. Add a statement to both *Point* constructors to increment the *objectCount* field, as shown in bold type in the code example that follows.

The *Point* class should now look like this:

```
class Point
{
    private int x, y;
    private static int objectCount = 0;
    public Point()
    {
        this.x = -1;
        this.y = -1;
        objectCount++;
    }
    public Point(int x, int y)
    {
        this.x = x;
        this.y = y;
        objectCount++;
    }
    public double DistanceTo(Point other)
    {
        int xDiff = this.x - other.x;
        int yDiff = this.y - other.y;
        return Math.Sqrt((xDiff * xDiff) + (yDiff * yDiff));
    }
}
```

Each time an object is created, its constructor is called. As long as you increment the *objectCount* in each constructor (including the default constructor), *objectCount* will hold the number of objects created so far. This strategy works only because *objectCount* is a shared *static* field. If *objectCount* were an instance field, each object would have its own personal *objectCount* field that would be set to 1.

The question now is this: How can users of the *Point* class find out how many *Point* objects have been created? At the moment, the *objectCount* field is *private* and not available outside the class. A poor solution would be to make the *objectCount* field publicly accessible. This strategy would break the encapsulation of the class, and you would then have no guarantee that its value was correct because anyone could change the value in the

field. A much better idea is to provide a *public static* method that returns the value of the *objectCount* field. This is what you will do now.

4. Add a *public static* method to the *Point* class called *ObjectCount* that returns an *int* but does not take any parameters. In this method, return the value of the *objectCount* field, as shown in bold type here:

```
class Point
{
    ...
    public static int ObjectCount()
    {
        return objectCount;
    }
}
```

5. Display the *Program* class in the Code and Text Editor window. Add a statement to the *doWork* method to write the value returned from the *ObjectCount* method of the *Point* class to the screen, as shown in bold type in the following code example:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Point origin = new Point();
    Point bottomRight = new Point(1366, 768);
    double distance = origin.distanceTo(bottomRight);
    Console.WriteLine("Distance is: {0}", distance);
    Console.WriteLine("Number of Point objects: {0}", Point.ObjectCount());
}
```

The *ObjectCount* method is called by referencing *Point*, the name of the class, and not the name of a *Point* variable (such as *origin* or *bottomRight*). Because two *Point* objects have been created by the time *ObjectCount* is called, the method should return the value 2.

6. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Confirm that the message “Number of Point objects: 2” is written to the console window (after the message displaying the value of the *distance* variable).



7. Press Enter to finish the program and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Anonymous classes

An *anonymous class* is a class that does not have a name. This sounds rather strange but is actually quite handy in some situations that you will see later in this book, especially when using query expressions. (You learn about query expressions in [Chapter 20](#).) For the time being, you'll have to take it on faith that they are useful.

You create an anonymous class simply by using the *new* keyword and a pair of braces defining the fields and values that you want the class to contain, like this:

```
myAnonymousObject = new { Name = "John", Age = 47 };
```

This class contains two public fields called *Name* (initialized to the string “*John*”) and *Age* (initialized to the integer 47). The compiler infers the types of the fields from the types of the data you specify to initialize them.

When you define an anonymous class, the compiler generates its own name for the class, but it won't tell you what it is. Anonymous classes therefore raise a potentially interesting conundrum: If you don't know the name of the class, how can you create an object of the appropriate type and assign an instance of the class to it? In the code example shown earlier, what should the type of the variable *myAnonymousObject* be? The answer is that you don't know—that is the point of anonymous classes! However, this is not a problem if you declare *myAnonymousObject* as an implicitly typed variable by using the *var* keyword, like this:

```
var myAnonymousObject = new { Name = "John", Age = 47 };
```

Remember that the *var* keyword causes the compiler to create a variable of the same type as the expression used to initialize it. In this case, the type of the expression is whatever name the compiler happens to generate for the anonymous class.

You can access the fields in the object by using the familiar dot notation, as is demonstrated here:

```
Console.WriteLine("Name: {0} Age: {1}", myAnonymousObject.Name,  
myAnonymousObject.Age);
```

You can even create other instances of the same anonymous class but with different values, such as in the following:

```
var anotherAnonymousObject = new { Name = "Diana", Age = 46 };
```

The C# compiler uses the names, types, number, and order of the fields to determine whether two instances of an anonymous class have the same type. In this case, the variables *myAnonymousObject* and *anotherAnonymousObject* have the same number of fields, with the same name and type, in the same order, so both variables are instances of the same anonymous class. This means that you can perform assignment statements such as this:

```
anotherAnonymousObject = myAnonymousObject;
```

#### NOTE

Be warned that this assignment statement might not accomplish what you expect. You'll learn more about assigning object variables in [Chapter 8](#).

There are quite a lot of restrictions on the contents of an anonymous class. For example, anonymous classes can contain only public fields, the fields must all be initialized, they cannot be static, and you cannot define any methods for them. You will use anonymous classes periodically throughout this book and learn more about them as you do so.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to define new classes. You learned that by default the fields and methods of a class are private and inaccessible to code outside of the class, but you can use the *public* keyword to expose fields and methods to the outside world. You saw how to use the *new* keyword to create a new instance of a class and how to define constructors that can initialize class instances. Finally, you saw how to implement static fields and methods to provide data and

operations that are independent of any specific instance of a class.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 8**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Declare a class	<p>Write the keyword <code>class</code>, followed by the name of the class, followed by an opening and closing brace. The methods and fields of the class are declared between the opening and closing braces. For example:</p> <pre>class Point {     ... }</pre>
Declare a constructor	<p>Write a method whose name is the same as the name of the class and that has no return type (not even <code>void</code>). For example:</p> <pre>class Point {     public Point(int x, int y)     {         ...     } }</pre>
Call a constructor	<p>Use the <code>new</code> keyword, and specify the constructor with an appropriate set of parameters. For example:</p> <pre>Point origin = new Point(0, 0);</pre>
Declare a static method	<p>Write the keyword <code>static</code> before the declaration of the method. For example:</p> <pre>class Point</pre>

	<pre> class Point {     public static int ObjectCount()     {         ...     } } </pre>
Call a static method	<p>Write the name of the class, followed by a period, followed by the name of the method. For example:</p> <pre> int pointsCreatedSoFar = Point.ObjectCount(); </pre>
Declare a static field	<p>Use the keyword static before the type of the field For example:</p> <pre> class Point {     ...     private static int objectCount; } </pre>
Declare a const field	<p>Write the keyword const before the declaration of the field, and omit the static keyword. For example:</p> <pre> class Math {     ...     public const double PI = ...; } </pre>
Access a static field	<p>Write the name of the class, followed by a period, followed by the name of the static field. For example:</p> <pre> double area = Math.PI * radius * radius; </pre>

# Chapter 8. Understanding values and references

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Copying value type variables and classes
- Using *ref* and *out* parameters
- Boxing
- Unboxing

Chapter 7 demonstrates how to declare your own classes and how to create objects by using the *new* keyword. That chapter also shows you how to initialize an object by using a constructor. In this chapter, you will learn about how the characteristics of the primitive types—such as *int*, *double*, and *char*—differ from the characteristics of class types.

## Copying value type variables and classes

Most of the primitive types built into C#, such as *int*, *float*, *double*, and *char* (but not *string*, for reasons that will be covered shortly) are collectively called *value types*. These types have a fixed size, and when you declare a variable as a value type, the compiler generates code that allocates a block of memory big enough to hold a corresponding value. For example, declaring an *int* variable causes the compiler to allocate 4 bytes of memory (32 bits). A statement that assigns a value (such as 42) to the *int* causes the value to be copied into this block of memory.

Class types such as *Circle* (described in Chapter 7) are handled differently. When you declare a *Circle* variable, the compiler *does not* generate code that allocates a block of memory big enough to hold a *Circle*; all it does is allot a

small piece of memory that can potentially hold the address of (or a reference to) another block of memory containing a *Circle*. (An address specifies the location of an item in memory.) The memory for the actual *Circle* object is allocated only when the *new* keyword is used to create the object. A class is an example of a *reference type*. Reference types hold references to blocks of memory. To write effective C# programs that make full use of the Microsoft .NET Framework, you need to understand the difference between value types and reference types.

#### NOTE

The *string* type in C# is actually a class. This is because there is no standard size for a string (different strings can contain different numbers of characters), and it is far more efficient to allocate memory for them dynamically when the program runs rather than statically at compile time. The description of reference types such as classes in this chapter applies to the *string* type, as well. In fact, the *string* keyword in C# is just an alias for the *System.String* class.

Consider the situation in which you declare a variable named *i* as an *int* and assign it the value 42. If you declare another variable called *copyi* as an *int* and then assign *i* to *copyi*, *copyi* will hold the same value as *i* (42). However, even though *copyi* and *i* happen to hold the same value, there are two blocks of memory containing the value 42: one block for *i* and the other block for *copyi*. If you modify the value of *i*, the value of *copyi* does not change. Let's see this in code:

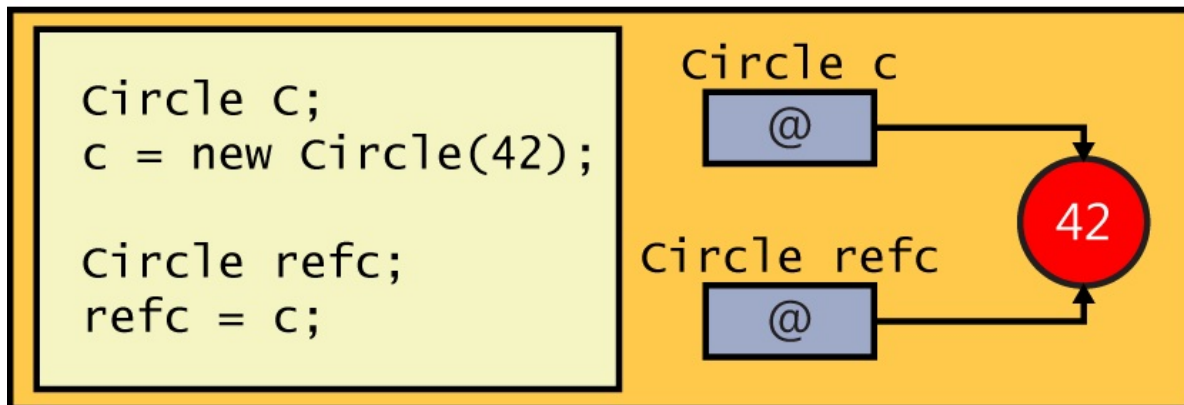
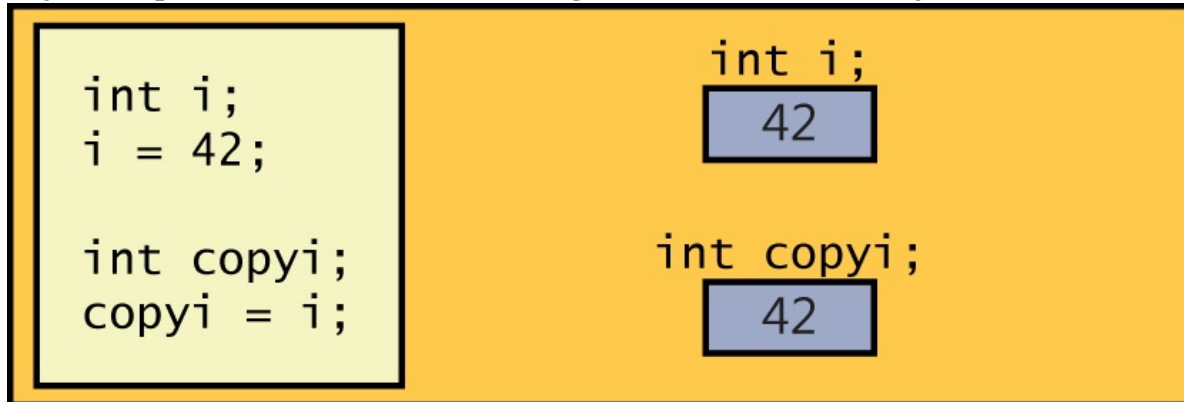
```
int i = 42;    // declare and initialize i
int copyi = i; /* copyi contains a copy of the data in i:
                i and copyi both contain the value 42
i++;          incrementing i has no effect on copyi;
                i now contains 43, but copyi still contains 42 */
```

The effect of declaring a variable *c* as a class type, such as *Circle*, is very different. When you declare *c* as a *Circle*, *c* can refer to a *Circle* object; the actual value held by *c* is the address of a *Circle* object in memory. If you declare an additional variable named *refc* (also as a *Circle*) and you assign *c* to *refc*, *refc* will have a copy of the same address as *c*; in other words, there is only one *Circle* object, and both *refc* and *c* now refer to it. Here's the example in code:

```
Circle c = new Circle(42);
```

```
Circle refc = c;
```

The following graphic illustrates both examples. The at sign (@) in the *Circle* objects represents a reference holding an address in memory:



This difference is very important. In particular, it means that the behavior of method parameters depends on whether they are value types or reference types. You'll explore this difference in the next exercise.

**COPYING REFERENCE TYPES AND DATA PRIVACY IF YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO COPY THE CONTENTS OF A *CIRCLE* OBJECT, *C*, INTO A DIFFERENT *CIRCLE* OBJECT, *REFC*, RATHER THAN JUST COPYING THE REFERENCE, YOU MUST ACTUALLY MAKE *REFC* REFER TO A NEW INSTANCE OF THE *CIRCLE* CLASS AND THEN COPY THE DATA, FIELD BY FIELD, FROM *C* INTO *REFC*, LIKE THIS:**

```
CIRCLE REFC = NEW CIRCLE();  
REFC.RADIUS = C.RADIUS;    // DON'T TRY THIS
```

**HOWEVER, IF ANY MEMBERS OF THE *CIRCLE* CLASS ARE PRIVATE (LIKE**

THE *RADIUS* FIELD), YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COPY THIS DATA. INSTEAD, YOU COULD MAKE THE DATA IN THE PRIVATE FIELDS ACCESSIBLE BY EXPOSING THEM AS PROPERTIES AND THEN USING THESE PROPERTIES TO READ THE DATA FROM *C* AND COPY IT INTO *REFC*. YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO DO THIS IN **CHAPTER 15**.

ALTERNATIVELY, A CLASS COULD PROVIDE A *CLONE* METHOD THAT RETURNS ANOTHER INSTANCE OF THE SAME CLASS, BUT POPULATED WITH THE SAME DATA. THE *CLONE* METHOD WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE PRIVATE DATA IN AN OBJECT AND COULD COPY THIS DATA DIRECTLY TO ANOTHER INSTANCE OF THE SAME CLASS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE *CLONE* METHOD FOR THE *CIRCLE* CLASS COULD BE DEFINED AS SHOWN HERE:

```
CLASS CIRCLE
{
    PRIVATE INT RADIUS;
    // CONSTRUCTORS AND OTHER METHODS OMITTED
    ...
    PUBLIC CIRCLE CLONE()
    {
        // CREATE A NEW CIRCLE OBJECT
        CIRCLE CLONE = NEW CIRCLE();
        // COPY PRIVATE DATA FROM THIS TO CLONE
        CLONE.RADIUS = THIS.RADIUS;
        // RETURN THE NEW CIRCLE OBJECT CONTAINING THE COPIED DATA
        RETURN CLONE;
    }
}
```

THIS APPROACH IS STRAIGHTFORWARD IF ALL THE PRIVATE DATA CONSISTS OF VALUES, BUT IF ONE OR MORE FIELDS ARE THEMSELVES REFERENCE TYPES (FOR EXAMPLE, THE *CIRCLE* CLASS MIGHT BE EXTENDED TO CONTAIN A *POINT* OBJECT FROM **CHAPTER 7**, INDICATING THE POSITION OF THE *CIRCLE* ON A GRAPH), THESE REFERENCE TYPES ALSO NEED TO PROVIDE A *CLONE* METHOD, AS WELL; OTHERWISE, THE *CLONE* METHOD OF THE *CIRCLE* CLASS WILL SIMPLY COPY A REFERENCE TO THESE FIELDS. THIS IS A PROCESS KNOWN AS A *DEEP COPY*. THE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH, WHEREIN THE *CLONE* METHOD SIMPLY COPIES REFERENCES, IS KNOWN AS A *SHALLOW COPY*.

THE PRECEDING CODE EXAMPLE ALSO POSES AN INTERESTING QUESTION: HOW PRIVATE IS PRIVATE DATA? PREVIOUSLY, YOU SAW THAT THE *PRIVATE* KEYWORD RENDERS A FIELD OR METHOD INACCESSIBLE FROM OUTSIDE OF A CLASS. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN IT CAN BE ACCESSED BY ONLY A SINGLE OBJECT. IF YOU CREATE TWO OBJECTS OF THE SAME CLASS, THEY CAN EACH ACCESS THE PRIVATE DATA OF THE OTHER. THIS SOUNDS CURIOUS, BUT IN FACT, METHODS SUCH AS *CLONE* DEPEND ON THIS FEATURE. THE STATEMENT



***CLONE.RADIUS = THIS.RADIUS;* ONLY WORKS BECAUSE THE PRIVATE *RADIUS* FIELD IN THE *CLONE* OBJECT IS ACCESSIBLE FROM WITHIN THE CURRENT INSTANCE OF THE *CIRCLE* CLASS. SO, PRIVATE ACTUALLY MEANS “PRIVATE TO THE CLASS” RATHER THAN “PRIVATE TO AN OBJECT.” HOWEVER, DON’T CONFUSE PRIVATE WITH STATIC. IF YOU SIMPLY DECLARE A FIELD AS PRIVATE, EACH INSTANCE OF THE CLASS GETS ITS OWN DATA. IF A FIELD IS DECLARED AS STATIC, EACH INSTANCE OF THE CLASS SHARES THE SAME DATA.**

Use value parameters and reference parameters

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Parameters project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 8\Windows X\Parameters folder in your Documents folder.

The project contains three C# code files: Pass.cs, Program.cs, and WrappedInt.cs.

3. Display the Pass.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file defines a class called *Pass* that is currently empty apart from a *// TODO:* comment.

#### TIP

Remember that you can use the Task List window to locate all *TODO* comments in a solution.

4. Add a *public static* method called *Value* to the *Pass* class, replacing the *// TODO:* comment. This method should accept a single *int* parameter (a value type) called *param* and have the return type *void*. The body of the *Value* method should simply assign the value 42 to *param*, as shown in bold type in the following code example:

```
namespace Parameters
{
    class Pass
    {
        public static void Value(int param)
        {
            param = 42;
        }
    }
}
```

#### NOTE

The reason you are defining this method as static is to keep the exercise simple. You can call the *Value* method directly on the *Pass* class rather than having to first create a new *Pass* object. The principles illustrated in this exercise apply in exactly the same manner to instance methods.

5. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window and then locate the *doWork* method of the *Program* class.

The *doWork* method is called by the *Main* method when the program starts running. As explained in **Chapter 7**, the method call is wrapped in a *try* block and followed by a *catch* handler.

6. Add four statements to the *doWork* method to perform the following tasks:
  - a. Declare a local *int* variable called *i* and initialize it to 0.
  - b. Write the value of *i* to the console by using *Console.WriteLine*.
  - c. Call *Pass.Value*, passing *i* as an argument.
  - d. Write the value of *i* to the console again.

With the calls to *Console.WriteLine* before and after the call to *Pass.Value*, you can see whether the call to *Pass.Value* actually modifies the value of *i*. The completed *doWork* method should look exactly like this:

```
static void doWork()
{
    int i = 0;
    Console.WriteLine(i);
    Pass.Value(i);
    Console.WriteLine(i);
}
```

- On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.
- Confirm that the value “0” is written to the console window twice.

The assignment statement inside the *Pass.Value* method that updates the parameter and sets it to 42 uses a copy of the argument passed in, and the original argument *i* is completely unaffected.

- Press the Enter key to close the application.

You will now see what happens when you pass an *int* parameter that is wrapped within a class.

- Display the WrappedInt.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. This file contains the *WrappedInt* class, which is empty apart from a *// TODO:* comment.
- Add a *public* instance field called *Number* of type *int* to the *WrappedInt* class, as shown in bold type in the following code:

```
namespace Parameters
{
    class WrappedInt
    {
        public int Number;
```

```
}  
}
```

- Display the *Pass.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add a *public static* method called *Reference* to the *Pass* class. This method should accept a single *WrappedInt* parameter called *param* and have the return type *void*. The body of the *Reference* method should assign 42 to *param.Number*, such as shown here:

```
public static void Reference(WrappedInt param)  
{  
    param.Number = 42;  
}
```

- Display the *Program.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window. Comment out the existing code in the *doWork* method and add four more statements to perform the following tasks:
  1. Declare a local *WrappedInt* variable called *wi* and initialize it to a new *WrappedInt* object by calling the default constructor.
  2. Write the value of *wi.Number* to the console.
  3. Call the *Pass.Reference* method, passing *wi* as an argument.
  4. Write the value of *wi.Number* to the console again.

As before, with the calls to *Console.WriteLine*, you can see whether the call to *Pass.Reference* modifies the value of *wi.Number*. The *DoWork* method should now look exactly like this (the new statements are highlighted in bold type):

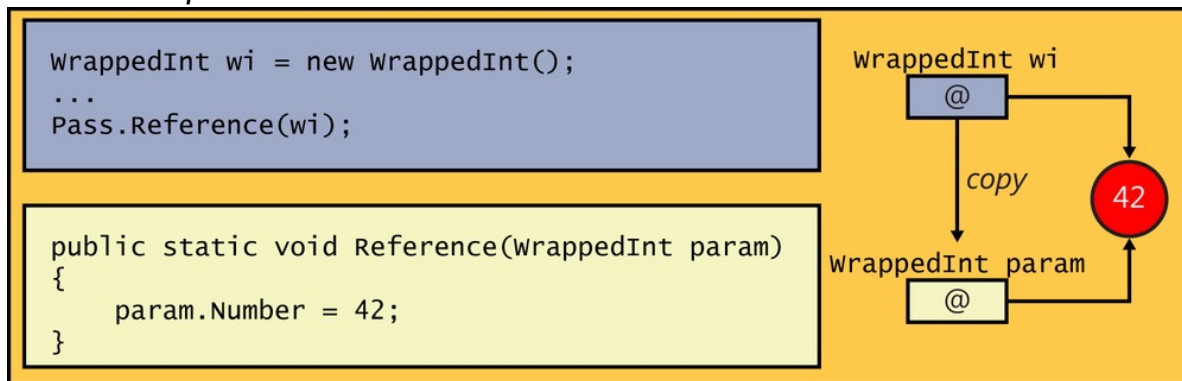
```
static void doWork()  
{  
    // int i = 0;  
    // Console.WriteLine(i);  
    // Pass.Value(i);  
    // Console.WriteLine(i);  
    WrappedInt wi = new WrappedInt();  
    Console.WriteLine(wi.Number);  
    Pass.Reference(wi);  
    Console.WriteLine(wi.Number);  
}
```

- On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the application.

This time, the two values displayed in the console window correspond to the value of *wi.Number* before and after the call to the *Pass.Reference* method. You should see that the values 0 and 42 are displayed.

- Press the Enter key to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.

To explain what the previous exercise shows, the value of *wi.Number* is initialized to 0 by the compiler-generated default constructor. The *wi* variable contains a reference to the newly created *WrappedInt* object (which contains an *int*). The *wi* variable is then copied as an argument to the *Pass.Reference* method. Because *WrappedInt* is a class (a reference type), *wi* and *param* both refer to the same *WrappedInt* object. Any changes made to the contents of the object through the *param* variable in the *Pass.Reference* method are visible by using the *wi* variable when the method completes. The following diagram illustrates what happens when a *WrappedInt* object is passed as an argument to the *Pass.Reference* method:



## Understanding null values and nullable types

When you declare a variable, it is always a good idea to initialize it. With value types, it is common to see code such as this:

```
int i = 0;  
double d = 0.0;
```

Remember that to initialize a reference variable such as a class, you can create a new instance of the class and assign the reference variable to the new object, like this:

```
Circle c = new Circle(42);
```

This is all very well, but what if you don't actually want to create a new object? Perhaps the purpose of the variable is simply to store a reference to an existing object at some later point in your program. In the following code example, the *Circle* variable *copy* is initialized, but later it is assigned a reference to another instance of the *Circle* class:

```
Circle c = new Circle(42);
Circle copy = new Circle(99); // Some random value, for initializing copy
...
copy = c;                      // copy and c refer to the same object
```

After assigning *c* to *copy*, what happens to the original *Circle* object with a radius of 99 that you used to initialize *copy*? Nothing refers to it anymore. In this situation, the runtime can reclaim the memory by performing an operation known as *garbage collection*, which you will learn more about in [Chapter 14](#). The important thing to understand for now is that garbage collection is a potentially time-consuming operation; you should not create objects that are never used, because doing so is a waste of time and resources.

You could argue that if a variable is going to be assigned a reference to another object at some point in a program, there is no point to initializing it. But, this is poor programming practice which can lead to problems in your code. For example, you will inevitably find yourself in the situation in which you want to refer a variable to an object only if that variable does not already contain a reference, as shown in the following code example:

```
Circle c = new Circle(42);
Circle copy;           // Uninitialized !!!
...
if (copy == // only assign to copy if it is uninitialized, but what goes here?)
{
    copy = c;          // copy and c refer to the same object
    ...
}
```

The purpose of the *if* statement is to test the *copy* variable to see whether it is initialized, but to which value should you compare this variable? The answer is to use a special value called *null*.

In C#, you can assign the *null* value to any reference variable. The *null* value simply means that the variable does not refer to an object in memory. You can use it like this:

```
Circle c = new Circle(42);
Circle copy = null;      // Initialized
...
if (copy == null)
{
    copy = c;            // copy and c refer to the same object
    ...
}
```

## Using nullable types

The *null* value is useful for initializing reference types. Sometimes, you need an equivalent value for value types, but *null* is itself a reference, and so you cannot assign it to a value type. The following statement is therefore illegal in C#:

```
int i = null; // illegal
```

However, C# defines a modifier that you can use to declare that a variable is a *nullable* value type. A nullable value type behaves in a similar manner to the original value type, but you can assign the *null* value to it. You use the question mark (?) to indicate that a value type is nullable, like this:

```
int? i = null; // legal
```

You can ascertain whether a nullable variable contains *null* by testing it in the same way as a reference type.

```
if (i == null)
    ...
```

You can assign an expression of the appropriate value type directly to a nullable variable. The following examples are all legal:

```
int? i = null;
int j = 99;
i = 100;      // Copy a value type constant to a nullable type
```

```
i = j;           // Copy a value type variable to a nullable type
```

You should note that the converse is not true. You cannot assign a nullable variable to an ordinary value type variable. So, given the definitions of variables *i* and *j* from the preceding example, the following statement is not allowed:

```
j = i;          // Illegal
```

This makes sense if you consider that the variable *i* might contain *null*, and *j* is a value-type that cannot contain *null*. This also means that you cannot use a nullable variable as a parameter to a method that expects an ordinary value type. If you recall, the *Pass.Value* method from the preceding exercise expects an ordinary *int* parameter, so the following method call will not compile:

```
int? i = 99;  
Pass.Value(i);    // Compiler error
```

## Understanding the properties of nullable types

A nullable type exposes a pair of properties that you can use to determine whether the type actually has a non-null value, and what this value is. The *HasValue* property indicates whether a nullable type contains a value or is *null*, and you can retrieve the value of a non-null nullable type by reading the *Value* property, like this:

```
int? i = null;  
...  
if (!i.HasValue)  
{  
    // If i is null, then assign it the value 99  
    i = 99;  
}  
else  
{  
    // If i is not null, then display its value  
    Console.WriteLine(i.Value);  
}
```

**Chapter 4** instructs that the NOT operator (!) negates a Boolean value. This code fragment tests the nullable variable *i*, and if it does not have a value (it is *null*), it

assigns it the value 99; otherwise, it displays the value of the variable. In this example, using the *HasValue* property does not provide any benefit over testing for a *null* value directly. Additionally, reading the *Value* property is a long-winded way of reading the contents of the variable. However, these apparent shortcomings are caused by the fact that *int?* is a very simple nullable type. You can create more complex value types and use them to declare nullable variables where the advantages of using the *HasValue* and *Value* properties become more apparent. You will see some examples in [Chapter 9](#).

#### NOTE

The *Value* property of a nullable type is read-only. You can use this property to read the value of a variable but not to modify it. To update a nullable variable, use an ordinary assignment statement.

## Using *ref* and *out* parameters

Ordinarily, when you pass an argument to a method, the corresponding parameter is initialized with a copy of the argument. This is true regardless of whether the parameter is a value type (such as an *int*), a nullable type (such as *int?*), or a reference type (such as a *WrappedInt*). This arrangement means that it's impossible for any change to the parameter to affect the value of the argument passed in. For example, in the following code, the value output to the console is 42 and not 43. The *doIncrement* method increments a *copy* of the argument (*arg*) and *not* the original argument, as demonstrated here:

```
static void doIncrement(int param)
{
    param++;
}
static void Main()
{
    int arg = 42;
    doIncrement(arg);
    Console.WriteLine(arg); // writes 42, not 43
}
```

In the preceding exercise, you saw that if the parameter to a method is a



reference type, any changes made by using that parameter change the data referenced by the argument passed in. The key point is this: Although the data that was referenced changed, the argument passed in as the parameter did not—it still references the same object. In other words, although it is possible to modify the object that the argument refers to through the parameter, it's not possible to modify the argument itself (for example, to set it to refer to a completely different object). Most of the time, this guarantee is very useful and can help to reduce the number of bugs in a program. Occasionally, however, you might want to write a method that actually needs to modify an argument. C# provides the *ref* and *out* keywords so that you can do this.

## Creating *ref* parameters

If you prefix a parameter with the *ref* keyword, the C# compiler generates code that passes a reference to the actual argument rather than a copy of the argument. When using a *ref* parameter, anything you do to the parameter you also do to the original argument because the parameter and the argument both reference the same data. When you pass an argument as a *ref* parameter, you must also prefix the argument with the *ref* keyword. This syntax provides a useful visual cue to the programmer that the argument might change. Here's the preceding example again, this time modified to use the *ref* keyword:

```
static void doIncrement(ref int param) // using ref
{
    param++;
}
static void Main()
{
    int arg = 42;
    doIncrement(ref arg);    // using ref
    Console.WriteLine(arg);  // writes 43
}
```

This time, the *doIncrement* method receives a reference to the original argument rather than a copy, so any changes the method makes by using this reference actually change the original value. That's why the value 43 is displayed on the console.

Remember that C# enforces the rule that you must assign a value to a variable

before you can read it. This rule also applies to method arguments; you cannot pass an uninitialized value as an argument to a method even if an argument is defined as a *ref* argument. For example, in the following example, *arg* is not initialized, so this code will not compile. This failure occurs because the statement *param++*; within the *doIncrement* method is really an alias for the statement *arg++*; and *this operation* is allowed only if *arg* has a defined value:

```
static void doIncrement(ref int param)
{
    param++;
}
static void Main()
{
    int arg;           // not initialized
    doIncrement(ref arg);
    Console.WriteLine(arg);
}
```

## Creating *out* parameters

The compiler checks whether a *ref* parameter has been assigned a value before calling the method. However, there might be times when you want the method itself to initialize the parameter. You can do this with the *out* keyword.

The *out* keyword is syntactically similar to the *ref* keyword. You can prefix a parameter with the *out* keyword so that the parameter becomes an alias for the argument. As when using *ref*, anything you do to the parameter, you also do to the original argument. When you pass an argument to an *out* parameter, you must also prefix the argument with the *out* keyword.

The keyword *out* is short for *output*. When you pass an *out* parameter to a method, the method *must* assign a value to it before it finishes or returns, as shown in the following example:

```
static void doInitialize(out int param)
{
    param = 42; // Initialize param before finishing
}
```

The following example does not compile, because *doInitialize* does not assign a value to *param*:

```
static void doInitialize(out int param)
{
    // Do nothing
}
```

Because an *out* parameter must be assigned a value by the method, you're allowed to call the method without initializing its argument. For example, the following code calls *doInitialize* to initialize the variable *arg*, which is then displayed on the console:

```
static void doInitialize(out int param)
{
    param = 42;
}
static void Main()
{
    int arg;           // not initialized
    doInitialize(out arg); // legal
    Console.WriteLine(arg); // writes 42
}
```

You will examine *ref* parameters in the next exercise.

Use *ref* parameters

1. Return to the Parameters project in Visual Studio 2013.
2. Display the Pass.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
3. Edit the *Value* method to accept its parameter as a *ref* parameter.

The *Value* method should look like this:

```
class Pass
{
    public static void Value(ref int param)
    {
        param = 42;
    }
    ...
}
```

4. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

5. Uncomment the first four statements. Notice that the third statement of the *doWork* method, *Pass.Value(i);* indicates an error. This is because the *Value* method now expects a *ref* parameter. Edit this statement so that the *Pass.Value* method call passes its argument as a *ref* parameter.

**NOTE**

Leave the four statements that create and test the *WrappedInt* object as they are.

The *doWork* method should now look like this:

```
class Program
{
    static void doWork()
    {
        int i = 0;
        Console.WriteLine(i);
        Pass.Value(ref i);
        Console.WriteLine(i);
        ...
    }
}
```

6. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program.

This time, the first two values written to the console window are 0 and 42. This result shows that the call to the *Pass.Value* method has successfully modified the argument *i*.

7. Press the Enter key to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.

**NOTE**

You can use the *ref* and *out* modifiers on reference type parameters as well as on value type parameters. The effect is exactly the same: The parameter becomes an alias for the argument.

## How computer memory is organized

Computers use memory to hold programs that are being executed and the data that these programs use. To understand the differences between value and reference types, it is helpful to understand how data is organized in memory.

Operating systems and language runtimes such as that used by C# frequently divide the memory used for holding data in two separate areas, each of which is managed in a distinct manner. These two areas of memory are traditionally called *the stack* and *the heap*. The stack and the heap serve different purposes, which are described here:

- When you call a method, the memory required for its parameters and its local variables is always acquired from the stack. When the method finishes (because it either returns or throws an exception), the memory acquired for the parameters and local variables is automatically released back to the stack and is available for reuse when another method is called. Method parameters and local variables on the stack have a well-defined life span: They come into existence when the method starts, and they disappear as soon as the method completes.

### NOTE

Actually, the same life span applies to variables defined in any block of code enclosed between opening and closing curly braces. In the following code example, the variable *i* is created when the body of the *while* loop starts, but it disappears when the *while* loop finishes and execution continues after the closing brace:

```
while (...)  
{  
    int i = ...; // i is created on the stack here  
    ...  
}  
// i disappears from the stack here
```

- When you create an object (an instance of a class) by using the *new* keyword, the memory required to build the object is always acquired from the heap. You have seen that the same object can be referenced from several places by using reference variables. When the last reference to an object disappears, the

memory used by the object becomes available for reuse (although it might not be reclaimed immediately). **Chapter 14** includes a more detailed discussion of how heap memory is reclaimed. Objects created on the heap therefore have a more indeterminate life span; an object is created by using the *new* keyword but only disappears sometime after the last reference to the object is removed.

#### NOTE

All value types are created on the stack. All reference types (objects) are created on the heap (although the reference itself is on the stack). Nullable types are actually reference types, and they are created on the heap.

The names *stack* and *heap* come from the way in which the runtime manages the memory:

- Stack memory is organized like a stack of boxes piled on top of one another. When a method is called, each parameter is put in a box that is placed on top of the stack. Each local variable is likewise assigned a box, and these are placed on top of the boxes already on the stack. When a method finishes, you can think of the boxes being removed from the stack.
- Heap memory is like a large pile of boxes strewn around a room rather than stacked neatly on top of each other. Each box has a label indicating whether it is in use. When a new object is created, the runtime searches for an empty box and allocates it to the object. The reference to the object is stored in a local variable on the stack. The runtime keeps track of the number of references to each box. (Remember that two variables can refer to the same object.) When the last reference disappears, the runtime marks the box as not in use, and at some point in the future it will empty the box and make it available for reuse.

## Using the stack and the heap

Now, let's examine what happens when the following method *Method* is called:

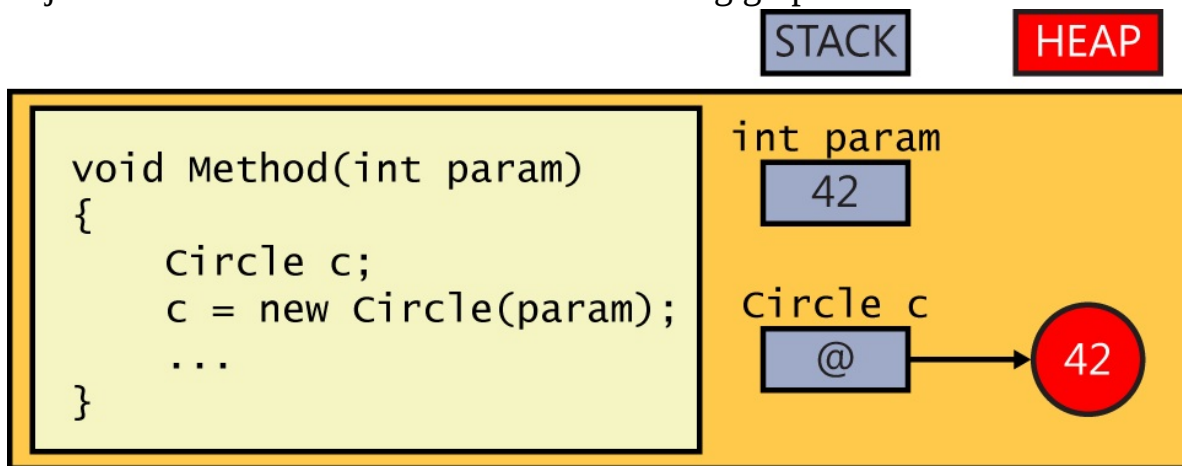
```
void Method(int param)
{
    Circle c;
```

```

    c = new Circle(param);
    ...
}

```

Suppose the argument passed into *param* is the value 42. When the method is called, a block of memory (just enough for an *int*) is allocated from the stack and initialized with the value 42. As execution moves inside the method, another block of memory big enough to hold a reference (a memory address) is also allocated from the stack but left uninitialized. (This is for the *Circle* variable, *c*.) Next, another piece of memory big enough for a *Circle* object is allocated from the heap. This is what the *new* keyword does. The *Circle* constructor runs to convert this raw heap memory to a *Circle* object. A reference to this *Circle* object is stored in the variable *c*. The following graphic illustrates the situation:



At this point, you should note two things:

- Although the object is stored on the heap, the reference to the object (the variable *c*) is stored on the stack.
- Heap memory is not infinite. If heap memory is exhausted, the *new* operator will throw an *OutOfMemoryException* exception and the object will not be created.

#### NOTE

The *Circle* constructor could also throw an exception. If it does, the memory allocated to the *Circle* object will be reclaimed and the value returned by the constructor will be *null*.

When the method ends, the parameters and local variables go out of scope. The memory acquired for *c* and for *param* is automatically released back to the stack. The runtime notes that the *Circle* object is no longer referenced and at some point in the future will arrange for its memory to be reclaimed by the heap. (See [Chapter 14](#).)

## The *System.Object* class

One of the most important reference types in the .NET Framework is the *Object* class in the *System* namespace. To fully appreciate the significance of the *System.Object* class requires that you understand inheritance, which is described in [Chapter 12](#). For the time being, simply accept that all classes are specialized types of *System.Object* and that you can use *System.Object* to create a variable that can refer to any reference type. *System.Object* is such an important class that C# provides the *object* keyword as an alias for *System.Object*. In your code, you can use *object* or you can write *System.Object*—they mean exactly the same thing.

### TIP

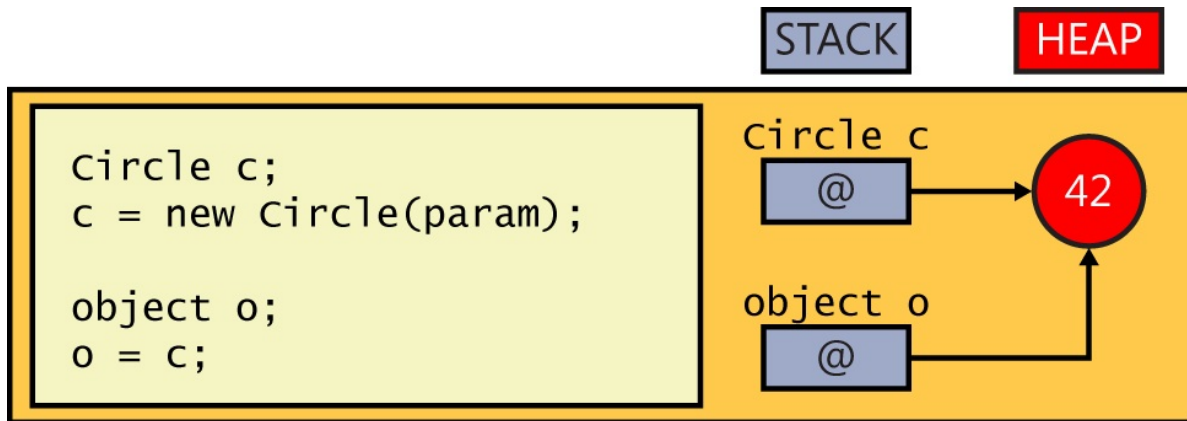
Use the *object* keyword in preference to *System.Object*. It's more direct, and it's consistent with other keywords that are synonyms for classes (such as *string* for *System.String* and some others that are covered in [Chapter 9](#)).

In the following example, the variables *c* and *o* both refer to the same *Circle* object. The fact that the type of *c* is *Circle* and the type of *o* is *object* (the alias for *System.Object*) in effect provides two different views of the same item in memory.

```
Circle c;  
c = new Circle(42);  
object o;  
o = c;
```

The following diagram illustrates how the variables *c* and *o* refer to the same item on the heap.



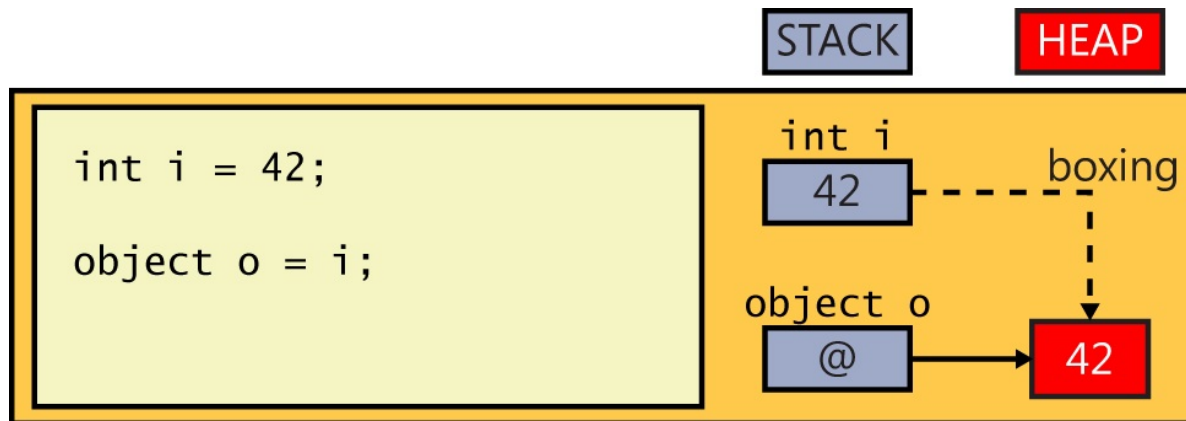


## Boxing

As you have just seen, variables of type *object* can refer to any item of any reference type. However, variables of type *object* can also refer to a value type. For example, the following two statements initialize the variable *i* (of type *int*, a value type) to 42 and then initialize the variable *o* (of type *object*, a reference type) to *i*:

```
int i = 42;  
object o = i;
```

The second statement requires a little explanation to appreciate what is actually happening. Remember that *i* is a value type and that it lives on the stack. If the reference inside *o* referred directly to *i*, the reference would refer to the stack. However, all references must refer to objects on the heap; creating references to items on the stack could seriously compromise the robustness of the runtime and create a potential security flaw, so it is not allowed. Therefore, the runtime allocates a piece of memory from the heap, copies the value of integer *i* to this piece of memory, and then refers the object *o* to this copy. This automatic copying of an item from the stack to the heap is called *boxing*. The following graphic shows the result:



#### IMPORTANT

If you modify the original value of the variable *i*, the value on the heap referenced through *o* will not change. Likewise, if you modify the value on the heap, the original value of the variable will not change.

## Unboxing

Because a variable of type *object* can refer to a boxed copy of a value, it's only reasonable to allow you to get at that boxed value through the variable. You might expect to be able to access the boxed *int* value that a variable *o* refers to by using a simple assignment statement such as this:

```
int i = o;
```

However, if you try this syntax, you'll get a compile-time error. If you think about it, it's pretty sensible that you can't use the *int i = o;* syntax. After all, *o* could be referencing absolutely anything and not just an *int*. Consider what would happen in the following code if this statement were allowed:

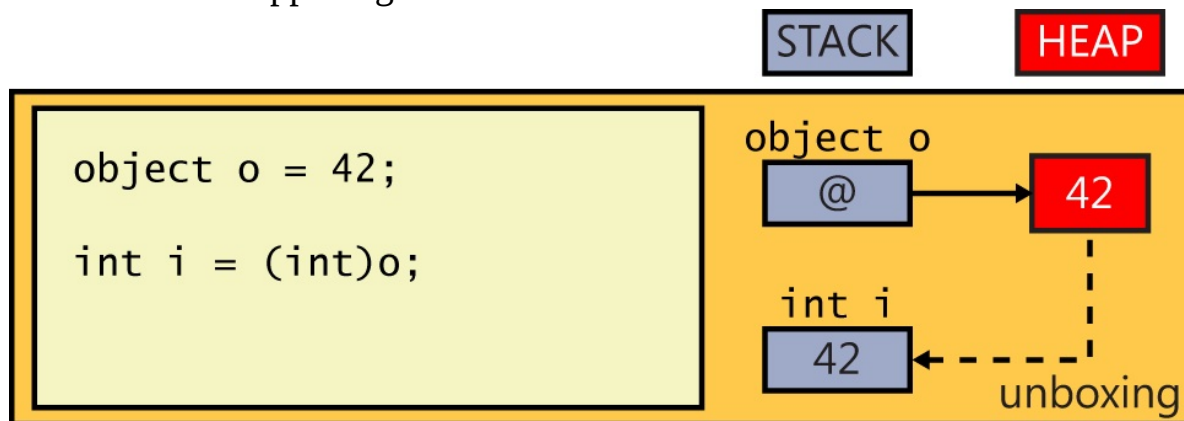
```
Circle c = new Circle();  
int i = 42;  
object o;  
o = c; // o refers to a circle  
i = o; // what is stored in i?
```

To obtain the value of the boxed copy, you must use what is known as a *cast*.

This is an operation that checks whether it is safe to convert an item of one type to another before it actually makes the copy. You prefix the *object* variable with the name of the type in parentheses, as in this example:

```
int i = 42;
object o = i; // boxes
i = (int)o;    // compiles okay
```

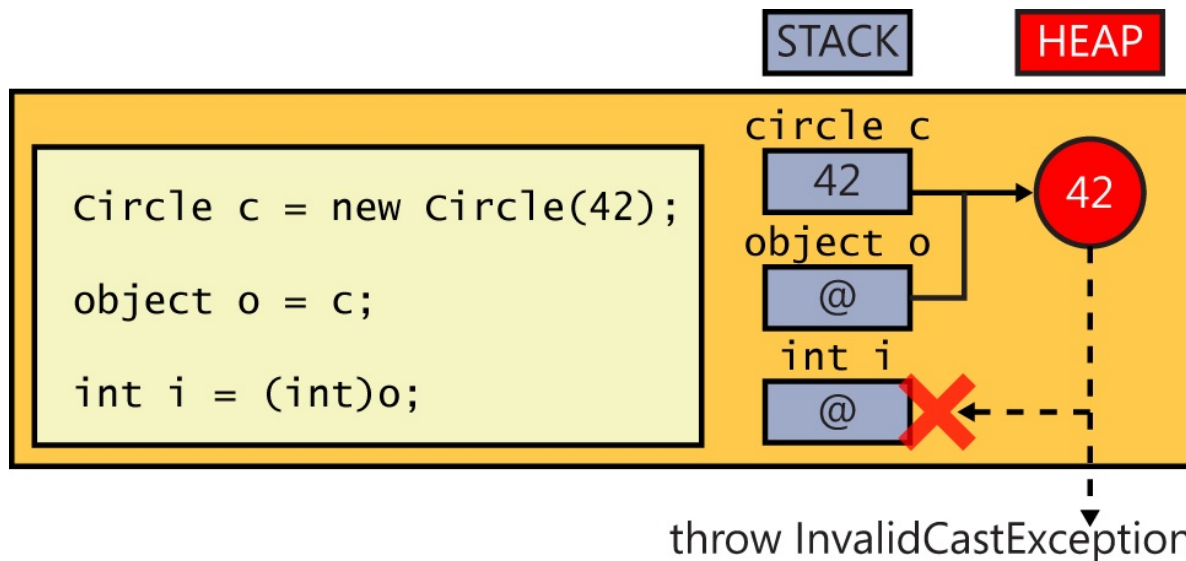
The effect of this cast is subtle. The compiler notices that you've specified the type *int* in the cast. Next, the compiler generates code to check what *o* actually refers to at run time. It could be absolutely anything. Just because your cast says *o* refers to an *int*, that doesn't mean it actually does. If *o* really does refer to a boxed *int* and everything matches, the cast succeeds and the compiler-generated code extracts the value from the boxed *int* and copies it to *i*. (In this example, the boxed value is then stored in *i*.) This is called *unboxing*. The following diagram shows what is happening:



On the other hand, if *o* does not refer to a boxed *int*, there is a type mismatch, causing the cast to fail. The compiler-generated code throws an *InvalidCastException* exception at run time. Here's an example of an unboxing cast that fails:

```
Circle c = new Circle(42);
object o = c;           // doesn't box because Circle is a reference variable
int i = (int)o;         // compiles okay but throws an exception at run time
```

The following diagram illustrates this case:



You will use boxing and unboxing in later exercises. Keep in mind that boxing and unboxing are expensive operations because of the amount of checking required and the need to allocate additional heap memory. Boxing has its uses, but injudicious use can severely impair the performance of a program. You will see an alternative to boxing in [Chapter 17](#).

## Casting data safely

By using a cast, you can specify that, *in your opinion*, the data referenced by an object has a specific type and that it is safe to reference the object by using that type. The key phrase here is “in your opinion.” The C# compiler will not check that this is the case, but the runtime will. If the type of object in memory does not match the cast, the runtime will throw an *InvalidCastException*, as described in the preceding section. You should be prepared to catch this exception and handle it appropriately if it occurs.

However, catching an exception and attempting to recover in the event that the type of an object is not what you expected it to be is a rather cumbersome approach. C# provides two more very useful operators that can help you perform casting in a much more elegant manner: the *is* and *as* operators.

### The *is* operator

You can use the *is* operator to verify that the type of an object is what you expect

it to be, like this:

```
WrappedInt wi = new WrappedInt();
...
object o = wi;
if (o is WrappedInt)
{
    WrappedInt temp = (WrappedInt)o; // This is safe; o is a WrappedInt
    ...
}
```

The *is* operator takes two operands: a reference to an object on the left, and the name of a type on the right. If the type of the object referenced on the heap has the specified type, *is* evaluates to *true*; otherwise, *is* evaluates to *false*. The preceding code attempts to cast the reference to the *object* variable *o* only if it knows that the cast will succeed.

## The *as* operator

The *as* operator fulfills a similar role to *is* but in a slightly truncated manner. You use the *as* operator like this:

```
WrappedInt wi = new WrappedInt();
...
object o = wi;
WrappedInt temp = o as WrappedInt;
if (temp != null)
{
    ... // Cast was successful
}
```

Like the *is* operator, the *as* operator takes an object and a type as its operands. The runtime attempts to cast the object to the specified type. If the cast is successful, the result is returned and, in this example, it is assigned to the *WrappedInt* variable *temp*. If the cast is unsuccessful, the *as* operator evaluates to the *null* value and assigns that to *temp* instead.

There is a little more to the *is* and *as* operators than is described here, and [Chapter 12](#) discusses them in greater detail.

**POINTERS AND UNSAFE CODE THIS SECTION IS PURELY FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND IS AIMED AT DEVELOPERS WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH C OR C++. IF YOU ARE NEW TO PROGRAMMING, FEEL FREE TO SKIP THIS SECTION.**

**IF YOU HAVE ALREADY WRITTEN PROGRAMS IN LANGUAGES SUCH AS C OR C++, MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION IN THIS CHAPTER CONCERNING OBJECT REFERENCES MIGHT BE FAMILIAR. ALTHOUGH NEITHER C NOR C++ HAS EXPLICIT REFERENCE TYPES, BOTH LANGUAGES HAVE A CONSTRUCT THAT PROVIDES SIMILAR FUNCTIONALITY: A POINTER.**

**A *POINTER* IS A VARIABLE THAT HOLDS THE ADDRESS OF, OR A REFERENCE TO, AN ITEM IN MEMORY (ON THE HEAP OR ON THE STACK). A SPECIAL SYNTAX IS USED TO IDENTIFY A VARIABLE AS A POINTER. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT DECLARES THE VARIABLE *PI* AS A POINTER TO AN INTEGER:**

```
INT *PI;
```

**ALTHOUGH THE VARIABLE *PI* IS DECLARED AS A POINTER, IT DOES NOT ACTUALLY POINT ANYWHERE UNTIL YOU INITIALIZE IT. FOR EXAMPLE, TO USE *PI* TO POINT TO THE INTEGER VARIABLE *I*, YOU CAN USE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND THE ADDRESS-OF OPERATOR (&), WHICH RETURNS THE ADDRESS OF A VARIABLE:**

```
INT *PI;
INT I = 99;
...
PI = &I;
```

**YOU CAN ACCESS AND MODIFY THE VALUE HELD IN THE VARIABLE *I* THROUGH THE POINTER VARIABLE *PI* LIKE THIS:**

```
*PI = 100;
```

**THIS CODE UPDATES THE VALUE OF THE VARIABLE *I* TO 100 BECAUSE *PI* POINTS TO THE SAME MEMORY LOCATION AS THE VARIABLE *I*.**

**ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS THAT DEVELOPERS LEARNING C AND C++ ENCOUNTER IS UNDERSTANDING THE SYNTAX USED BY POINTERS. THE \* OPERATOR HAS AT LEAST TWO MEANINGS (IN ADDITION TO BEING THE ARITHMETIC MULTIPLICATION OPERATOR), AND THERE IS OFTEN GREAT CONFUSION ABOUT WHEN TO USE & RATHER THAN \*. THE OTHER ISSUE WITH POINTERS IS THAT IT IS EASY TO POINT SOMEWHERE INVALID, OR TO FORGET TO POINT SOMEWHERE AT ALL, AND THEN TRY TO REFERENCE THE DATA POINTED TO. THE RESULT WILL BE EITHER GARBAGE OR A PROGRAM THAT FAILS WITH AN ERROR BECAUSE THE OPERATING SYSTEM DETECTS AN ATTEMPT TO ACCESS AN ILLEGAL ADDRESS IN MEMORY. THERE IS ALSO A WHOLE RANGE OF SECURITY**

FLAWS IN MANY EXISTING SYSTEMS RESULTING FROM THE MISMANAGEMENT OF POINTERS; SOME ENVIRONMENTS (NOT MICROSOFT WINDOWS) FAIL TO ENFORCE CHECKS THAT A POINTER DOES NOT REFER TO MEMORY THAT BELONGS TO ANOTHER PROCESS, OPENING UP THE POSSIBILITY THAT CONFIDENTIAL DATA COULD BE COMPROMISED.

REFERENCE VARIABLES WERE ADDED TO C# TO AVOID ALL THESE PROBLEMS. IF YOU REALLY WANT TO, YOU CAN CONTINUE TO USE POINTERS IN C#, BUT YOU MUST MARK THE CODE AS *UNSAFE*. THE *UNSAFE* KEYWORD CAN BE USED TO MARK A BLOCK OF CODE, OR AN ENTIRE METHOD, AS SHOWN HERE:

```
PUBLIC STATIC VOID MAIN(STRING [] ARGS)
{
    INT X = 99, Y = 100;
    UNSAFE
    {
        SWAP (&X, &Y);
    }
    CONSOLE.WRITELINE("X IS NOW {0}, Y IS NOW {1}", X, Y);
}

PUBLIC STATIC UNSAFE VOID SWAP(INT A, INT B)
{
    INT TEMP;
    TEMP = A;
    A = B;
    B = TEMP;
}
```

WHEN YOU COMPILE PROGRAMS CONTAINING UNSAFE CODE, YOU MUST SPECIFY THE ALLOW UNSAFE CODE OPTION WHEN BUILDING THE PROJECT. TO DO THIS, RIGHT-CLICK THE PROJECT IN SOLUTION EXPLORER AND THEN, IN THE SHORTCUT MENU THAT APPEARS, CLICK PROPERTIES. IN THE PROPERTIES WINDOW, CLICK THE BUILD TAB, SELECT ALLOW UNSAFE CODE, AND THEN, ON THE FILE MENU, CLICK SAVE ALL.

UNSAFE CODE ALSO HAS A BEARING ON HOW MEMORY IS MANAGED. OBJECTS CREATED IN UNSAFE CODE ARE SAID TO BE UNMANAGED. ALTHOUGH NOT COMMON, YOU MIGHT FIND SOME SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE YOU TO ACCESS MEMORY IN THIS WAY, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE WRITING CODE THAT NEEDS TO PERFORM SOME LOW-LEVEL WINDOWS OPERATIONS.

YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF USING CODE THAT ACCESSES UNMANAGED MEMORY IN MORE DETAIL IN **CHAPTER 14**.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned about some important differences between value types that hold their value directly on the stack and reference types that refer indirectly to their objects on the heap. You also learned how to use the *ref* and *out* keywords on method parameters to gain access to the arguments. You saw how assigning a value (such as the *int* 42) to a variable of the *System.Object* class creates a boxed copy of the value on the heap and then causes the *System.Object* variable to refer to this boxed copy. You also saw how assigning a variable of a value type (such as an *int*) from a variable of the *System.Object* class copies (or unboxes) the value in the *System.Object* class to the memory used by the *int*.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 9**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Copy a value type variable	Simply make the copy. Because the variable is a value type, you will have two copies of the same value. For example:  <pre>int i = 42; int copyi = i;</pre>
Copy a reference type variable	Simply make the copy. Because the variable is a reference type, you will have two references to the same object. For example:  <pre>Circle c = new Circle(42); Circle refc = c;</pre>
Declare a variable that can hold a value type or the null value	Declare the variable by using the ? modifier with the type. For example:  <pre>int? i = null;</pre>



Pass an argument to a ref parameter	<p>Prefix the argument with the ref keyword. This makes the parameter an alias for the actual argument rather than a copy of the argument. The method may change the value of the parameter, and this change is made to the actual argument rather than a local copy. For example:</p> <pre> static void Main() {     int arg = 42;     DoWork(ref arg);     Console.WriteLine(arg); } </pre>
Pass an argument to an out parameter	<p>Prefix the argument with the out keyword. This makes the parameter an alias for the actual argument rather than a copy of the argument. The method must assign a value to the parameter, and this value is made to the actual argument. For example:</p> <pre> static void Main() {     int arg;     DoWork(out arg);     Console.WriteLine(arg); } </pre>
Box a value	<p>Initialize or assign a variable of type object with the value. For example:</p> <pre> object o = 42; </pre>
Unbox a value	<p>Cast the object reference that refers to the boxed value to the type of the value variable. For example:</p> <pre> int i = (int)o; </pre>
Cast an object safely	<p>Use the is operator to test whether the cast is valid. For example:</p> <pre> WrappedInt wi = new WrappedInt(); ... object o = wi; if (o is WrappedInt) { </pre>

```
    WrappedInt temp = (WrappedInt)o;
    ...
}
```

Alternatively, use the as operator to perform the cast, and test whether the result is null. For example:

```
WrappedInt wi = new WrappedInt();
...
object o = wi;
WrappedInt temp = o as WrappedInt;
if (temp != null)
    ...
```

# Chapter 9. Creating value types with enumerations and structures

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Declaring an enumeration
- Using an enumeration
- Declaring a structure
- Create and use a structure type.
- Understanding structure and class differences

**Chapter 8** covers the two fundamental types that exist in Microsoft Visual C#: *value types* and *reference types*. Recall that a value type variable holds its value directly on the stack, whereas a reference type variable holds a reference to an object on the heap. **Chapter 7** demonstrates how to create your own reference types by defining classes. In this chapter, you'll learn how to create your own value types.

C# supports two kinds of value types: *enumerations* and *structures*. We'll look at each of them in turn.

## Working with enumerations

Suppose that you want to represent the seasons of the year in a program. You could use the integers 0, 1, 2, and 3 to represent spring, summer, fall, and winter, respectively. This system would work, but it's not very intuitive. If you used the integer value 0 in code, it wouldn't be obvious that a particular 0 represented spring. It also wouldn't be a very robust solution. For example, if you declare an *int* variable named *season*, there is nothing to stop you from assigning it any

legal integer value outside of the set 0, 1, 2, or 3. C# offers a better solution. You can create an enumeration (sometimes called an *enum* type), whose values are limited to a set of symbolic names.

## Declaring an enumeration

You define an enumeration by using the *enum* keyword, followed by a set of symbols identifying the legal values that the type can have, enclosed between braces. Here's how to declare an enumeration named *Season* whose literal values are limited to the symbolic names *Spring*, *Summer*, *Fall*, and *Winter*:

```
enum Season { Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter }
```

## Using an enumeration

After you have declared an enumeration, you can use it in exactly the same way as any other type. If the name of your enumeration is *Season*, you can create variables of type *Season*, fields of type *Season*, and parameters of type *Season*, as shown in this example:

```
enum Season { Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter }
class Example
{
    public void Method(Season parameter) // method parameter example
    {
        Season localVariable; // local variable example
        ...
    }
    private Season currentSeason; // field example
}
```

Before you can read the value of an enumeration variable, it must be assigned a value. You can assign a value that is defined by the enumeration only to an enumeration variable, as is illustrated here:

```
Season colorful = Season.Fall;
Console.WriteLine(colorful); // writes out 'Fall'
```

NOTE

As you can with all value types, you can create a nullable version of an enumeration variable by using the `?` modifier. You can then assign the *null* value, as well the values defined by the enumeration, to the variable:

```
Season? colorful = null;
```

Notice that you have to write *Season.Fall* rather than just *Fall*. All enumeration literal names are scoped by their enumeration type. This is useful because it makes it possible for different enumerations to coincidentally contain literals with the same name.

Also, notice that when you display an enumeration variable by using *Console.WriteLine*, the compiler generates code that writes out the name of the literal whose value matches the value of the variable. If needed, you can explicitly convert an enumeration variable to a string that represents its current value by using the built-in *ToString* method that all enumerations automatically contain, as demonstrated in the following example:

```
string name = colorful.ToString();  
Console.WriteLine(name);      // also writes out 'Fall'
```

Many of the standard operators that you can use on integer variables you can also use on enumeration variables (except the *bitwise* and *shift* operators, which are covered in [Chapter 16](#)). For example, you can compare two enumeration variables of the same type for equality by using the equality operator (`==`), and you can even perform arithmetic on an enumeration variable (although the result might not always be meaningful!).

## Choosing enumeration literal values

Internally, an enumeration type associates an integer value with each element of the enumeration. By default, the numbering starts at 0 for the first element and goes up in steps of 1. It's possible to retrieve the underlying integer value of an enumeration variable. To do this, you must cast it to its underlying type. The discussion in [Chapter 8](#) on unboxing instructs that casting a type converts the data from one type to another, as long as the conversion is valid and meaningful. The following code example writes out the value 2 and not the word *Fall*

(remember, in the *Season* enumeration *Spring* is 0, *Summer* 1, *Fall* 2, and *Winter* 3):

```
enum Season { Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter }  
...  
Season colorful = Season.Fall;  
Console.WriteLine((int)colorful); // writes out '2'
```

If you prefer, you can associate a specific integer constant (such as 1) with an enumeration literal (such as *Spring*), as in the following example:

```
enum Season { Spring = 1, Summer, Fall, Winter }
```

#### IMPORTANT

The integer value with which you initialize an enumeration literal must be a compile-time constant value (such as 1).

If you don't explicitly give an enumeration literal a constant integer value, the compiler gives it a value that is one greater than the value of the previous enumeration literal, except for the very first enumeration literal, to which the compiler gives the default value 0. In the preceding example, the underlying values of *Spring*, *Summer*, *Fall*, and *Winter* are now 1, 2, 3, and 4.

You are allowed to give more than one enumeration literal the same underlying value. For example, in the United Kingdom, *Fall* is referred to as *Autumn*. You can cater to both cultures as follows:

```
enum Season { Spring, Summer, Fall, Autumn = Fall, Winter }
```

## Choosing an enumeration's underlying type

When you declare an enumeration, the enumeration literals are given values of type *int*. You can also choose to base your enumeration on a different underlying integer type. For example, to declare that *Season*'s underlying type is a *short* rather than an *int*, you can write this:

```
enum Season : short { Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter }
```

The main reason for doing this is to save memory; an *int* occupies more memory than a *short*, and if you do not need the entire range of values available to an *int*, using a smaller data type can make sense.

You can base an enumeration on any of the eight integer types: *byte*, *sbyte*, *short*, *ushort*, *int*, *uint*, *long*, or *ulong*. The values of all the enumeration literals must fit within the range of the chosen base type. For example, if you base an enumeration on the *byte* data type, you can have a maximum of 256 literals (starting at 0).

Now that you know how to declare an enumeration, the next step is to use it. In the following exercise, you will work with a console application to declare and use an enumeration that represents the months of the year.

Create and use an enumeration

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the StructsAndEnums project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 9\Windows X\StructsAndEnums folder in your Documents folder.

3. In the Code and Text Editor window, display the Month.cs file.

The source file is empty apart from the declaration of a namespace called *StructsAndEnums* and a *// TODO:* comment.

4. Delete the *// TODO:* comment and add an enumeration named *Month* for modeling the months of the year within the *StructsAndEnums* namespace, as shown in bold in the code that follows. The 12 enumeration literals for *Month* are *January* through *December*.

```
namespace StructsAndEnums
{
    enum Month
    {
        January, February, March, April,
        May, June, July, August,
        September, October, November, December
    }
}
```

5. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

As in the exercises in previous chapters, the *Main* method calls the *doWork* method and traps any exceptions that occur.

6. In the Code and Text Editor window, add a statement to the *doWork* method to declare a variable named *first* of type *Month* and initialize it to *Month.January*. Add another statement to write the value of the *first* variable to the console.

The *doWork* method should look like this:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Month first = Month.January;
    Console.WriteLine(first);
}
```

#### NOTE

When you type the period following *Month*, Microsoft IntelliSense automatically displays all the values in the *Month* enumeration.

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Visual Studio 2013 builds and runs the program. Confirm that the word *January* is written to the console.

8. Press Enter to close the program and return to the Visual Studio 2013 programming environment.
9. Add two more statements to the *doWork* method to increment the *first* variable and display its new value to the console, as shown in bold here:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Month first = Month.January;
    Console.WriteLine(first);
    first++;
    Console.WriteLine(first);
}
```



10. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Visual Studio 2013 builds and runs the program. Confirm that the words *January* and *February* are written to the console.

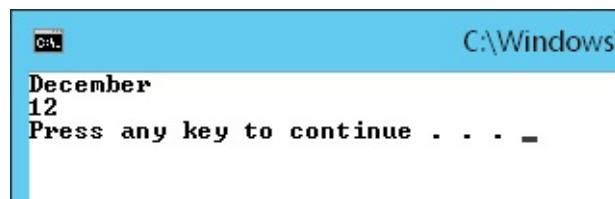
Notice that performing a mathematical operation (such as the increment operation) on an enumeration variable changes the internal integer value of the variable. When the variable is written to the console, the corresponding enumeration value is displayed.

11. Press Enter to close the program and return to the Visual Studio 2013 programming environment.
12. Modify the first statement in the *doWork* method to initialize the *first* variable to *Month.December*, as shown in bold here:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Month first = Month.December;
    Console.WriteLine(first);
    first++;
    Console.WriteLine(first);
}
```

13. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Visual Studio 2013 builds and runs the program. This time, the word *December* is written to the console, followed by the number 12.



Although you can perform arithmetic on an enumeration, if the results of the operation are outside the range of values defined for the enumerator, all the runtime can do is interpret the value of the variable as the corresponding integer value.

14. Press Enter to close the program and return to the Visual Studio 2013 programming environment.

# Working with structures

Chapter 8 illustrated that classes define reference types that are always created on the heap. In some cases, the class can contain so little data that the overhead of managing the heap becomes disproportionate. In these cases, it is better to define the type as a structure. A structure is a value type. Because structures are stored on the stack, as long as the structure is reasonably small, the memory management overhead is often reduced.

Like a class, a structure can have its own fields, methods, and (with one important exception discussed later in this chapter) constructors.

## COMMON STRUCTURE TYPES

You might not have realized it, but you have already used structures in previous exercises in this book. In C#, the primitive numeric types *int*, *long*, and *float* are aliases for the structures *System.Int32*, *System.Int64*, and *System.Single*, respectively. These structures have fields and methods, and you can actually call methods on variables and literals of these types. For example, all of these structures provide a *ToString* method that can convert a numeric value to its string representation. The following statements are all legal in C#:

```
int i = 55;
Console.WriteLine(i.ToString());
Console.WriteLine(55.ToString());
float f = 98.765F;
Console.WriteLine(f.ToString());
Console.WriteLine(98.765F.ToString());
```

You don't see this use of the *ToString* method often, because the *Console.WriteLine* method calls it automatically when it is needed. It is more common to use some of the static methods exposed by these structures. For example, in earlier chapters you used the static *int.Parse* method to convert a string to its corresponding integer value. What you are actually doing is invoking the *Parse* method of the *Int32* structure:

```
string s = "42";
int i = int.Parse(s);    // exactly the same as Int32.Parse
```

These structures also include some useful static fields. For example, *Int32.MaxValue* is the maximum value that an *int* can hold, and *Int32.MinValue* is the smallest value that you can store in an *int*.

The following table shows the primitive types in C# and their equivalent types in the Microsoft .NET Framework. Notice that the string and object types are classes (reference types) rather than structures.

Keyword	Type equivalent	Class or structure
---------	-----------------	--------------------

bool	System.Boolean	Structure
byte	System.Byte	Structure
decimal	System.Decimal	Structure
double	System.Double	Structure
float	System.Single	Structure
int	System.Int32	Structure
long	System.Int64	Structure
object	System.Object	Class
sbyte	System.SByte	Structure
short	System.Int16	Structure
string	System.String	Class
uint	System.UInt32	Structure

ulong	System.UInt64	Structure
ushort	System.UInt16	Structure

## Declaring a structure

To declare your own structure type, you use the *struct* keyword followed by the name of the type, followed by the body of the structure, between opening and closing braces. Syntactically, the process is similar to declaring a class. For example, here is a structure named *Time* that contains three *public int* fields named *hours*, *minutes*, and *seconds*:

```
struct Time
{
    public int hours, minutes, seconds;
}
```

As with classes, making the fields of a structure *public* is not advisable in most cases; there is no way to control the values held in *public* fields. For example, anyone could set the value of *minutes* or *seconds* to a value greater than 60. A better idea is to make the fields *private* and provide your structure with constructors and methods to initialize and manipulate these fields, as shown in this example:

```
struct Time
{
    private int hours, minutes, seconds;
    ...
    public Time(int hh, int mm, int ss)
    {
        this.hours = hh % 24;
        this.minutes = mm % 60;
        this.seconds = ss % 60;
    }
    public int Hours()
    {
```

```

        return this.hours;
    }
}

```

#### NOTE

By default, you cannot use many of the common operators on your own structure types. For example, you cannot use operators such as the equality operator (`==`) and the inequality operator (`!=`) on your own structure type variables. However, you can use the built-in `Equals()` method exposed by all structures to compare them, and you can also explicitly declare and implement operators for your own structure types. The syntax for doing this is covered in [Chapter 21](#).

When you copy a value type variable, you get two copies of the value. In contrast, when you copy a reference type variable, you get two references to the same object. In summary, use structures for small data values for which it's just as or nearly as efficient to copy the value as it would be to copy an address. Use classes for more complex data that is too big to copy efficiently.

#### TIP

Use structures to implement simple concepts whose main feature is their value rather than the functionality that they provide.

## Understanding structure and class differences

A structure and a class are syntactically similar, but there are a few important differences. Let's look at some of these variances:

- You can't declare a default constructor (a constructor with no parameters) for a structure. The following example would compile if *Time* were a class, but because *Time* is a structure, it does not:

```

struct Time
{
    public Time() { ... } // compile-time error
    ...
}

```

The reason you can't declare your own default constructor for a structure is that the compiler *always* generates one. In a class, the compiler generates the default constructor only if you don't write a constructor yourself. The compiler-generated default constructor for a structure always sets the fields to *0*, *false*, or *null*—just as for a class. Therefore, you should ensure that a structure value created by the default constructor behaves logically and makes sense with these default values. This has some ramifications that you will explore in the next exercise.

You can initialize fields to different values by providing a nondefault constructor. However, when you do this, your nondefault constructor must explicitly initialize all fields in your structure; the default initialization no longer occurs. If you fail to do this, you'll get a compile-time error. For example, although the following example would compile and silently initialize *seconds* to *0* if *Time* were a class, because *Time* is a structure, it fails to compile:

```
struct Time
{
    private int hours, minutes, seconds;
    ...
    public Time(int hh, int mm)
    {
        this.hours = hh;
        this.minutes = mm;
    } // compile-time error: seconds not initialized
}
```

- In a class, you can initialize instance fields at their point of declaration. In a structure, you cannot. The following example would compile if *Time* were a class, but because *Time* is a structure, it causes a compile-time error:

```
struct Time
{
    private int hours = 0; // compile-time error
    private int minutes;
    private int seconds;
    ...
}
```

The following table summarizes the main differences between a structure and a class.

Question	Structure	Class
Is this a value type or a reference type?	A structure is a value type.	A class is a reference type.
Do instances live on the stack or the heap?	Structure instances are called values and live on the stack.	Class instances are called objects and live on the heap.
Can you declare a default constructor?	No.	Yes.
If you declare your own constructor, will the compiler still generate the default constructor?	Yes.	No.
If you don't initialize a field in your own constructor, will the compiler automatically initialize it for you?	No.	Yes.
Are you allowed to initialize instance fields at their point of declaration?	No.	Yes.

There are other differences between classes and structures concerning inheritance. These differences are covered in [Chapter 12](#).

## Declaring structure variables

After you have defined a structure type, you can use it in exactly the same way as any other type. For example, if you have defined the *Time* structure, you can create variables, fields, and parameters of type *Time*, as shown in this example:

```
struct Time
{
    private int hours, minutes, seconds;
    ...
}
class Example
{
    private Time currentTime;
    public void Method(Time parameter)
    {
        Time localVariable;
        ...
    }
}
```

```
}  
}
```

#### NOTE

As with enumerations, you can create a nullable version of a structure variable by using the `?` modifier. You can then assign the *null* value to the variable:

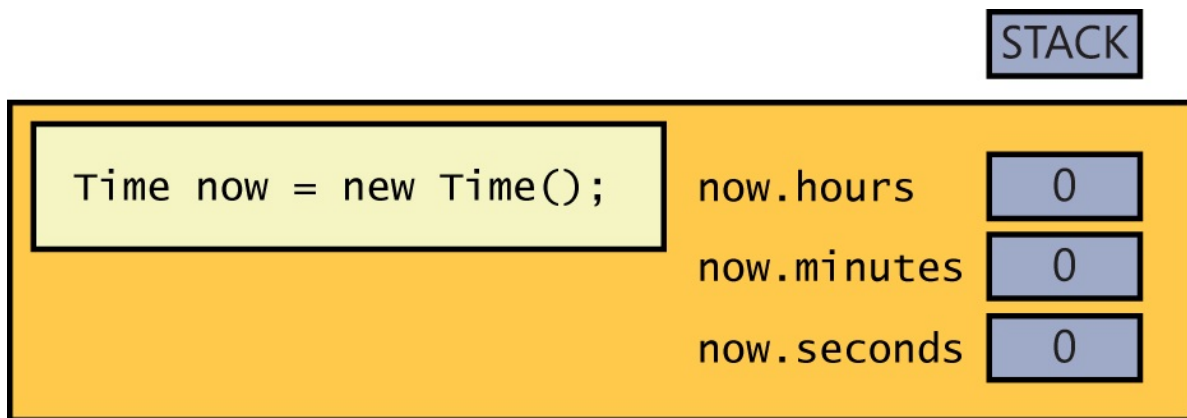
```
Time? currentTime = null;
```

## Understanding structure initialization

Earlier in this chapter, you saw how you can initialize the fields in a structure by using a constructor. If you call a constructor, the various rules described earlier guarantee that all the fields in the structure will be initialized:

```
Time now = new Time();
```

The following graphic depicts the state of the fields in this structure:

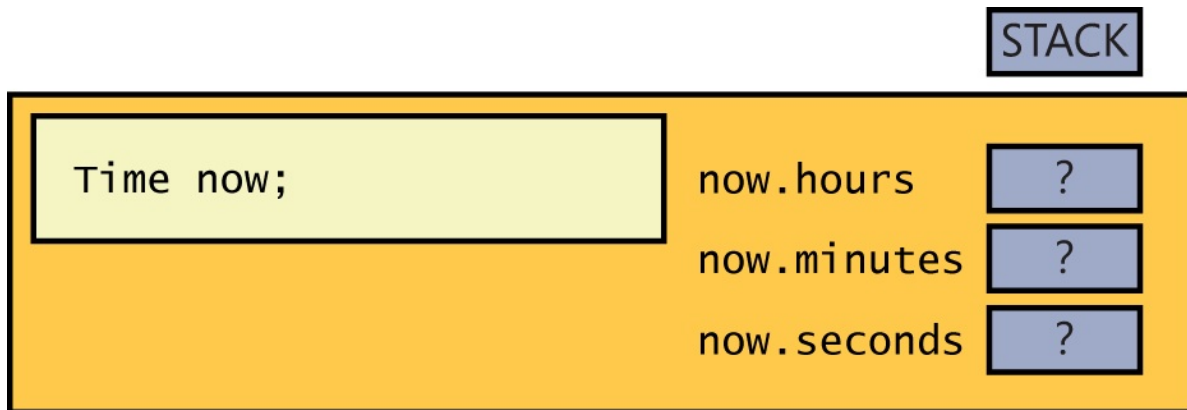


However, because structures are value types, you can also create structure variables without calling a constructor, as shown in the following example:

```
Time now;
```

This time, the variable is created but its fields are left in their uninitialized state. The following graphic depicts the state of the fields in the *now* variable. Any attempt to access the values in these fields will result in a compiler error:





Note that in both cases, the *Time* variable is created on the stack.

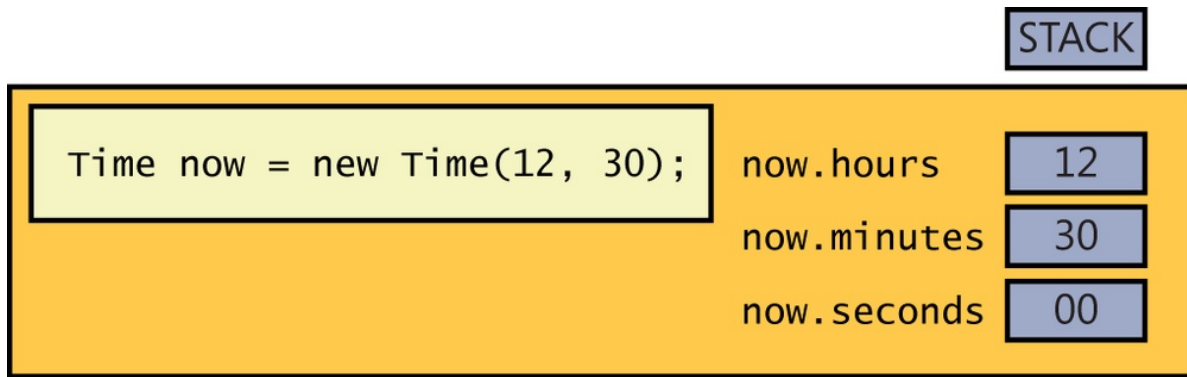
If you've written your own structure constructor, you can also use that to initialize a structure variable. As explained earlier in this chapter, a structure constructor must always explicitly initialize all its fields. For example:

```
struct Time
{
    private int hours, minutes, seconds;
    ...
    public Time(int hh, int mm)
    {
        hours = hh;
        minutes = mm;
        seconds = 0;
    }
}
```

The following example initializes *now* by calling a user-defined constructor:

```
Time now = new Time(12, 30);
```

The following graphic shows the effect of this example:



It's time to put this knowledge into practice. In the following exercise, you will create and use a structure to represent a date.

Create and use a structure type

1. In the `StructsAndEnums` project, display the `Date.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add a structure named *Date* inside the *StructsAndEnums* namespace.

This structure should contain three private fields: one named *year* of type *int*, one named *month* of type *Month* (using the enumeration you created in the preceding exercise), and one named *day* of type *int*. The *Date* structure should look exactly as follows:

```
struct Date
{
    private int year;
    private Month month;
    private int day;
}
```

Consider the default constructor that the compiler will generate for *Date*. This constructor sets the *year* to 0, the *month* to 0 (the value of January), and the *day* to 0. The *year* value 0 is not valid (because there was no year 0), and the *day* value 0 is also not valid (because each month starts on day 1). One way to fix this problem is to translate the *year* and *day* values by implementing the *Date* structure so that when the *year* field holds the value *Y*, this value represents the year *Y* + 1900 (or you can pick a different century if you prefer), and when the *day* field holds the value *D*, this value represents the day *D* + 1. The default constructor will then set the three

fields to values that represent the date 1 January 1900.

If you could override the default constructor and write your own, this would not be an issue, because you could then initialize the year and day fields directly to valid values. You cannot do this, though, and so you have to implement the logic in your structure to translate the compiler-generated default values into meaningful values for your problem domain.

However, although you cannot override the default constructor, it is still good practice to define nondefault constructors to allow a user to explicitly initialize the fields in a structure to meaningful nondefault values.

3. Add a *public* constructor to the *Date* structure. This constructor should take three parameters: an *int* named *ccyy* for the year, a *Month* named *mm* for the month, and an *int* named *dd* for the day. Use these three parameters to initialize the corresponding fields. A year field with the value *Y* represents the year  $Y + 1900$ , so you need to initialize the year field to the value  $ccyy - 1900$ . A day field with the value *D* represents the day  $D + 1$ , so you need to initialize the day field to the value  $dd - 1$ .

The *Date* structure should now look like this (with the constructor shown in bold):

```
struct Date
{
    private int year;
    private Month month;
    private int day;
    public Date(int ccyy, Month mm, int dd)
    {
        this.year = ccyy - 1900;
        this.month = mm;
        this.day = dd - 1;
    }
}
```

4. Add a *public* method named *ToString* to the *Date* structure after the constructor. This method takes no arguments and returns a string representation of the date. Remember, the value of the year field represents  $year + 1900$ , and the value of the day field represents  $day + 1$ .

#### NOTE

The *ToString* method is a little different from the methods you have seen so far. Every type, including structures and classes that you define, automatically has a *ToString* method whether or not you want it. Its default behavior is to convert the data in a variable to a string representation of that data. Sometimes, the default behavior is meaningful; other times, it is less so. For example, the default behavior of the *ToString* method generated for the *Date* class simply generates the string “*StructsAndEnums.Date*”. To quote Zaphod Beeblebrox in *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* by Douglas Adams (Pan Macmillan, 1980), this is “shrewd, but dull.” You need to define a new version of this method that overrides the default behavior by using the *override* keyword. Overriding methods are discussed in more detail in [Chapter 12](#).

The *ToString* method should look like this:

```
struct Date
{
    ...
    public override string ToString()
    {
        string data = String.Format("{0} {1} {2}", this.month, this.day + 1,
                                     this.year + 1900);

        return data;
    }
}
```

The *Format* method of the *String* class makes it possible for you to format data. It operates in a similar manner to the *Console.WriteLine* method, except that rather than displaying data to the console, it returns the formatted result as a string. In this example, the positional parameters are replaced with the text representations of the values of the *month* field, the expression *this.day + 1*, and the expression *this.year + 1900*. The *ToString* method returns the formatted string as its result.

5. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
6. In the *doWork* method, comment out the existing four statements.
7. Add statements to the *doWork* method that declare a local variable named *defaultDate*, and initialize it to a *Date* value constructed by using the

default *Date* constructor. Add another statement to *doWork* to display the *defaultDate* variable on the console by calling *Console.WriteLine*.

**NOTE**

The *Console.WriteLine* method automatically calls the *ToString* method of its argument to format the argument as a string.

The *doWork* method should now look like this:

```
static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Date defaultDate = new Date();
    Console.WriteLine(defaultDate);
}
```

**NOTE**

When you type the *new* keyword, IntelliSense automatically detects that there are two constructors available for the *Date* type.

8. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the program. Verify that the date January 1 1900 is written to the console.
9. Press the Enter key to return to the Visual Studio 2013 programming environment.
10. In the Code and Text Editor window, return to the *doWork* method, and add two more statements. In the first statement, declare a local variable named *weddingAnniversary* and initialize it to July 4 2013. (I actually did get married on Independence Day, although it was many years ago.) In the second statement, write the value of *weddingAnniversary* to the console.

The *doWork* method should now look like this:

```
static void doWork()
{
```

```

...
Date weddingAnniversary = new Date(2013, Month.July, 4);
Console.WriteLine(weddingAnniversary);
}

```

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging, and then confirm that the date July 4 2013 is written to the console below the previous information.
12. Press Enter to close the program and return to Visual Studio 2013.

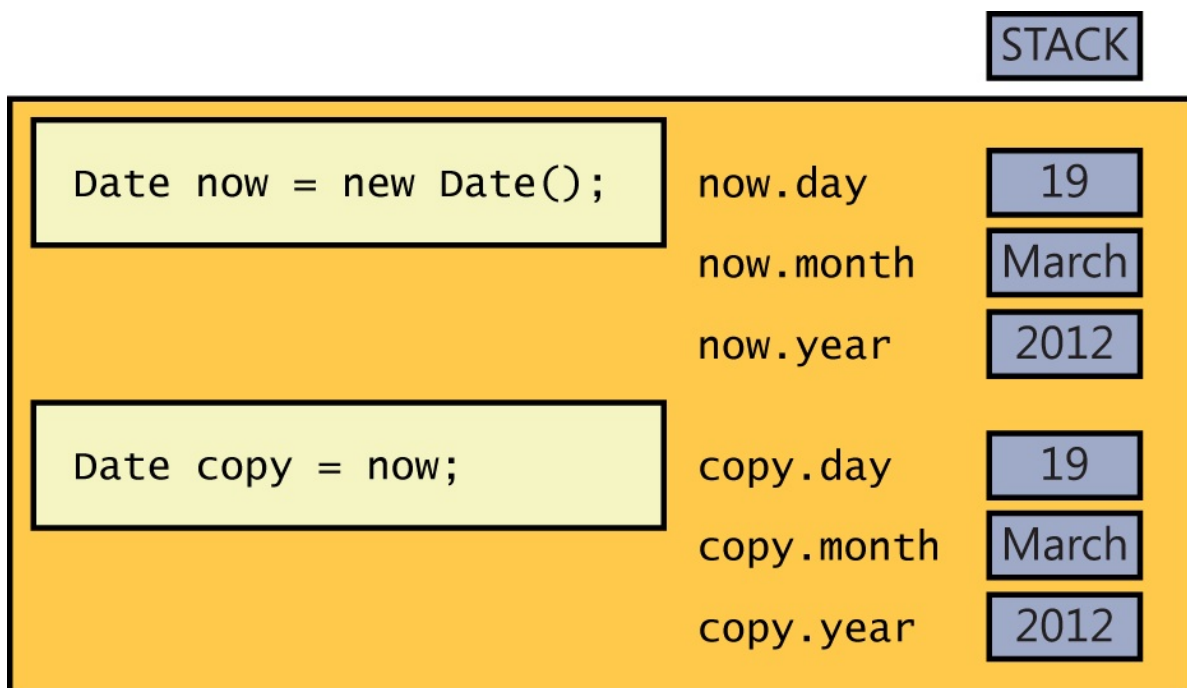
## Copying structure variables

You're allowed to initialize or assign one structure variable to another structure variable, but only if the structure variable on the right side is completely initialized (that is, if all its fields are populated with valid data rather than undefined values). The following example compiles because *now* is fully initialized. The graphic shows the results of performing such an assignment (this image was created on March 19, 2013).

```

Date now = new Date();
Date copy = now;

```



The following example fails to compile because *now* is not initialized:

```
Date now;  
Date copy = now; // compile-time error: now has not been assigned
```

When you copy a structure variable, each field on the left side is set directly from the corresponding field on the right side. This copying is done as a fast, single operation that copies the contents of the entire structure and that never throws an exception. Compare this behavior with the equivalent action if *Time* were a class, in which case both variables (*now* and *copy*) would end up referencing the *same* object on the heap.

#### NOTE

If you are a C++ programmer, you should note that this copy behavior cannot be customized.

In the final exercise in this chapter, you will contrast the copy behavior of a structure with that of a class.

Compare the behavior of a structure and a class

1. In the StructsAndEnums project, display the Date.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add the following method to the *Date* structure. This method advances the date in the structure by one month. If, after advancing the month, the value of the *month* field has moved beyond December, this code resets the month to January and advances the value of the *year* field by 1.

```
struct Date  
{  
    ...  
    public void AdvanceMonth()  
    {  
        this.month++;  
        if (this.month == Month.December + 1)  
        {  
            this.month = Month.January;  
            this.year++;  
        }  
    }  
}
```

```
    }  
}
```

3. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
4. In the *doWork* method, comment out the first two uncommented statements that create and display the value of the *defaultDate* variable.
5. Add the following code shown in bold to the end of the *doWork* method. This code creates a copy of the *weddingAnniversary* variable called *weddingAnniversaryCopy* and prints out the value of this new variable.

```
static void doWork()  
{  
    ...  
    Date weddingAnniversaryCopy = weddingAnniversary;  
    Console.WriteLine("Value of copy is {0}", weddingAnniversaryCopy);  
}
```

6. Add the following statements shown in bold to the end of the *doWork* method. These statements call the *AdvanceMonth* method of the *weddingAnniversary* variable and then display the value of the *weddingAnniversary* and *weddingAnniversaryCopy* variables:

```
static void doWork()  
{  
    ...  
    weddingAnniversary.AdvanceMonth();  
    Console.WriteLine("New value of weddingAnniversary is {0}",  
weddingAnniversary);  
    Console.WriteLine("Value of copy is still {0}", weddingAnniversaryCopy);  
}
```

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the application. Verify that the console window displays the following messages:

```
July 4 2013  
Value of copy is July 4 2013  
New value of weddingAnniversary is August 4 2013  
Value of copy is still July 4 2013
```



The first message displays the initial value of the *weddingAnniversary* variable (July 4 2013). The second message displays the value of the *weddingAnniversaryCopy* variable. You can see that it contains the same date held in the *weddingAnniversary* variable (July 4 2013). The third message displays the value of the *weddingAnniversary* variable after changing the month to August (August 4 2013). The final statement displays the value of the *weddingAnniversaryCopy* variable. Notice that it has not changed from its original value of July 4 2013.

If *Date* were a class, creating a copy would reference the same object in memory as the original instance. Changing the month in the original instance would therefore also change the date referenced through the copy. You will verify this assertion in the following steps.

8. Press Enter and return to Visual Studio 2013.
9. Display the *Date.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window.
10. Change the *Date* structure into a class, as shown in bold in the following code example:

```
class Date
{
    ...
}
```

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the application again. Verify that the console window displays the following messages:

```
July 4 2013
Value of copy is July 4 2013
New value of weddingAnniversary is August 4 2013
Value of copy is still August 4 2013
```

The first three messages are the same as before. However, the fourth message shows that the value of the *weddingAnniversaryCopy* variable has changed to August 4 2013.

12. Press Enter and return to Visual Studio 2013.

### STRUCTS AND COMPATIBILITY WITH THE WINDOWS RUNTIME ON WINDOWS 8 AND WINDOWS 8.1

All C# applications execute by using the Common Language Runtime (CLR) of the .NET Framework. The CLR is responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for your application code in the form of a *virtual machine* (if you have come from a Java background, this concept should be familiar to you). When you compile a C# application, the compiler converts your C# code into a set of instructions using a pseudo-machine code called the Common Intermediate Language (CIL). These are the instructions that are stored in an assembly. When you run a C# application, the CLR takes responsibility for converting the CIL instructions into real machine instructions that the processor on your computer can understand and execute. This whole environment is known as the *managed* execution environment, and C# programs are frequently referred to as *managed code*. You can also write managed code in other languages supported by the .NET Framework, such as Visual Basic and F#.

On Windows 7 and earlier, you can additionally write unmanaged applications, also known as *native code*, based on the Win32 APIs, which are the APIs that interface directly with the Windows operating system (the CLR also converts many of the functions in the .NET Framework into Win32 API calls if you are running a managed application, although this process is totally transparent to your code). To do this, you can use a language such as C++. The .NET Framework makes it possible for you to integrate managed code into unmanaged applications, and vice versa, through a set of interoperability technologies. Detailing how these technologies work and how you use them is beyond the scope of this book—suffice to say that it was not always straightforward.

Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 provides an alternative strategy, in the form of the Windows Runtime, or WinRT. WinRT provides a layer on top of the Win32 API (and other selected native Windows APIs) that is optimized for touch-based devices and user interfaces, such as those found on Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 tablets. When you build a native application on Windows 8 or Windows 8.1, you use the APIs exposed by WinRT rather than Win32. Similarly, the CLR on Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 also uses WinRT; all managed code written by using C# or any other managed language is still executed by the CLR, but at run time the CLR converts your code into WinRT API calls rather than Win32. Between them, the CLR and WinRT are responsible for managing and running your code safely.

A primary purpose of WinRT is to simplify the interoperability between languages so that you can more easily integrate components developed by using different programming languages into a single seamless application. However, this simplicity comes at a cost, and you have to be prepared to make a few compromises based on the different feature sets of the various languages available. In particular, for historical reasons, although C++ supports structures, it does not recognize member functions. In C# terms, a member function is an instance method. So, if you are building C# structs that you want to package up in a library to make available to developers programming in C++ (or any other unmanaged language), these structs should not contain any instance methods. The same restriction applies to static methods in structs. If you want to include instance or static methods, you should convert your struct into a class. Additionally, structs cannot contain private fields, and all public fields must be C# primitive types, conforming value types, or strings.

WinRT also imposes some other restrictions on C# classes and structs if you want to make them available to native applications. [Chapter 12](#) provides more information.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to create and use enumerations and structures. You learned some of the similarities and differences between a structure and a class, and you saw how to define constructors to initialize the fields in a structure. You also saw how to represent a structure as a string by overriding the *ToString* method.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 10](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Declare an enumeration	Write the keyword <code>enum</code> , followed by the name of the type, followed by a pair of braces containing a comma-separated list of the enumeration literal names. For example:  <pre>enum Season { Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter }</pre>
Declare an enumeration variable	Write the name of the enumeration on the left followed by the name of the variable, followed by a semicolon. For example:  <pre>Season currentSeason;</pre>
Assign an enumeration variable to a value	Write the name of the enumeration literal in combination with the name of the enumeration to which it belongs. For example:  <pre>currentSeason = Spring;           // error currentSeason = Season.Spring;    // correct</pre>
Declare a structure	Write the keyword <code>struct</code> , followed by the name of the structure type, followed

type	<p>by the body of the structure (the constructors, methods, and fields). For example:</p> <pre> struct Time {     public Time(int hh, int mm, int ss)     { ... }     ...     private int hours, minutes, seconds; } </pre>
Declare a structure variable	<p>Write the name of the structure type, followed by the name of the variable, followed by a semicolon. For example:</p> <pre> Time now; </pre>
Initialize a structure variable to a value	<p>Initialize the variable to a structure value created by calling the structure constructor. For example:</p> <pre> Time lunch = new Time(12, 30, 0); </pre>

# Chapter 10. Using arrays

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Declaring and creating an array
- Populating and using an array
- Accessing an individual array element
- Iterating through an array

You have already seen how to create and use variables of many different types. However, all the examples of variables you have seen so far have one thing in common—they hold information about a single item (an *int*, a *float*, a *Circle*, a *Date*, and so on). What happens if you need to manipulate a set of items? One solution is to create a variable for each item in the set, but this leads to a number of further questions: How many variables do you need? How should you name them? If you need to perform the same operation on each item in the set (such as increment each variable in a set of integers), how would you avoid very repetitive code? This solution assumes that you know, when you write the program, how many items you will need, but how often is this the case? For example, if you are writing an application that reads and processes records from a database, how many records are in the database, and how likely is this number to change?

Arrays provide a mechanism that helps to solve these problems.

## Declaring and creating an array

An *array* is an unordered sequence of items. All the items in an array have the same type, unlike the fields in a structure or class, which can have different types. The items in an array live in a contiguous block of memory and are

accessed by using an index, unlike fields in a structure or class, which are accessed by name.

## Declaring array variables

You declare an array variable by specifying the name of the element type, followed by a pair of square brackets, followed by the variable name. The square brackets signify that the variable is an array. For example, to declare an array of *int* variables named *pins* (for holding a set of personal identification numbers) you can write the following:

```
int[] pins; // Personal Identification Numbers
```

### NOTE

If you are a Microsoft Visual Basic programmer, you should observe that square brackets, not parentheses, are used in the declaration. If you're familiar with C and C++, also note that the size of the array is not part of the declaration. Java programmers should discern that the square brackets must be placed *before* the variable name.

You are not restricted to primitive types as array elements. You can also create arrays of structures, enumerations, and classes. For example, you can create an array of *Date* structures like this:

```
Date[] dates;
```

### TIP

It is often useful to give array variables plural names, such as *places* (where each element is a *Place*), *people* (where each element is a *Person*), or *times* (where each element is a *Time*).

## Creating an array instance

Arrays are reference types, regardless of the type of their elements. This means that an array variable *refers* to a contiguous block of memory holding the array elements on the heap, just as a class variable refers to an object on the heap. (For a description of values and references and the differences between the stack and

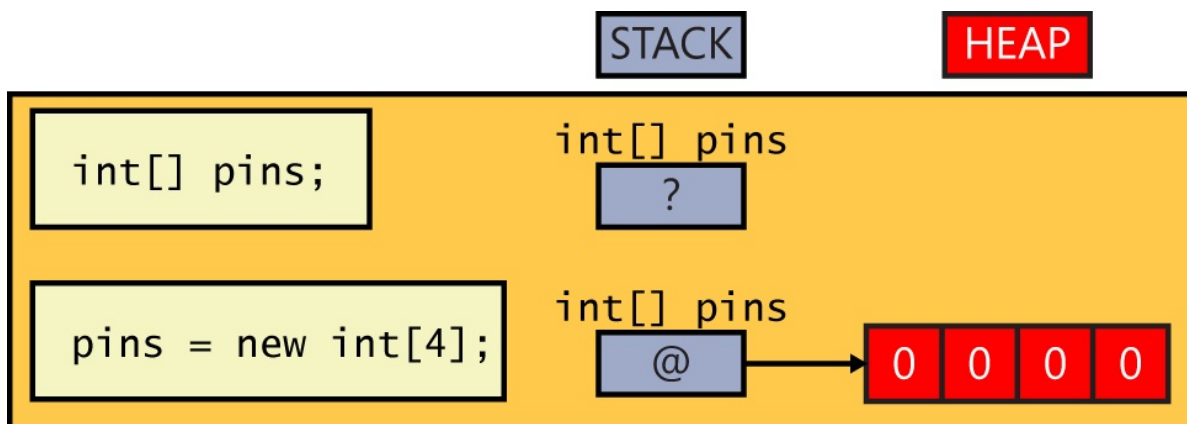
the heap, see [Chapter 8](#).) This rule applies regardless of the type of the data items in the array. Even if the array contains a value type such as *int*, the memory will still be allocated on the heap; this is the one case where value types are not allocated memory on the stack.

Remember that when you declare a class variable, memory is not allocated for the object until you create the instance by using *new*. Arrays follow the same pattern: when you declare an array variable, you do not declare its size and no memory is allocated (other than to hold the reference on the stack). The array is given memory only when the instance is created, and this is also the point at which you specify the size of the array.

To create an array instance, you use the *new* keyword followed by the element type, followed by the size of the array you're creating between square brackets. Creating an array also initializes its elements by using the now familiar default values (*0*, *null*, or *false*, depending on whether the type is numeric, a reference, or a Boolean, respectively). For example, to create and initialize a new array of four integers for the *pins* variable declared earlier, you write this:

```
pins = new int[4];
```

The following graphic illustrates what happens when you declare an array, and later when you create an instance of the array:



Because the memory for the array instance is allocated dynamically, the size of the array does not have to be a constant; it can be calculated at run time, as shown in this example:

```
int size = int.Parse(Console.ReadLine());  
int[] pins = new int[size];
```

```
int[] pins = new int[size];
```

You're can also create an array whose size is 0. This might sound bizarre, but it's useful for situations in which the size of the array is determined dynamically and could even be 0. An array of size 0 is not a *null* array; it is an array containing zero elements.

## Populating and using an array

When you create an array instance, all the elements of the array are initialized to a default value depending on their type. For example, all numeric values default to 0, objects are initialized to *null*, *DateTime* values are set to the date and time "01/01/0001 00:00:00", and strings are initialized to *null*. You can modify this behavior and initialize the elements of an array to specific values if you prefer. You achieve this by providing a comma-separated list of values between a pair of braces. For example, to initialize *pins* to an array of four *int* variables whose values are 9, 3, 7, and 2, you write this:

```
int[] pins = new int[4]{ 9, 3, 7, 2 };
```

The values between the braces do not have to be constants; they can be values calculated at run time, as shown in the following example, which populates the *pins* array with four random numbers:

```
Random r = new Random();  
int[] pins = new int[4]{ r.Next() % 10, r.Next() % 10,  
                        r.Next() % 10, r.Next() % 10 };
```

### NOTE

The *System.Random* class is a pseudorandom number generator. The *Next* method returns a nonnegative random integer in the range 0 to *Int32.MaxValue* by default. The *Next* method is overloaded, and other versions enable you to specify the minimum value and maximum value of the range. The default constructor for the *Random* class seeds the random number generator with a time-dependent seed value, which reduces the possibility of the class duplicating a sequence of random numbers. Using an overloaded version of the constructor, you can provide your own seed value. That way, you can generate a repeatable sequence of random numbers for testing purposes.



The number of values between the braces must exactly match the size of the array instance being created:

```
int[] pins = new int[3]{ 9, 3, 7, 2 }; // compile-time error
int[] pins = new int[4]{ 9, 3, 7 };    // compile-time error
int[] pins = new int[4]{ 9, 3, 7, 2 }; // OK
```

When you're initializing an array variable in this way, you can actually omit the *new* expression and the size of the array. In this case, the compiler calculates the size from the number of initializers and generates code to create the array, such as in the following example:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };
```

If you create an array of structures or objects, you can initialize each structure in the array by calling the structure or class constructor, as shown in this example:

```
Time[] schedule = { new Time(12,30), new Time(5,30) };
```

## Creating an implicitly typed array

The element type when you declare an array must match the type of elements that you attempt to store in the array. For example, if you declare *pins* to be an array of *int*, as shown in the preceding examples, you cannot store a *double*, *string*, *struct*, or anything that is not an *int* in this array. If you specify a list of initializers when declaring an array, you can let the C# compiler infer the actual type of the elements in the array for you, like this:

```
var names = new[]{"John", "Diana", "James", "Francesca"};
```

In this example, the C# compiler determines that the *names* variable is an array of strings. It is worth pointing out a couple of syntactic quirks in this declaration. First, you omit the square brackets from the type; the *names* variable in this example is declared simply as *var*, not *var[]*. Second, you must specify the *new* operator and square brackets before the initializer list.

If you use this syntax, you must ensure that all the initializers have the same type. This next example causes the compile-time error “No best type found for implicitly typed array”:

implicitly typed array .

```
var bad = new[]{"John", "Diana", 99, 100};
```

However, in some cases, the compiler will convert elements to a different type, if doing so makes sense. In the following code, the *numbers* array is an array of *double* because the constants 3.5 and 99.999 are both *double*, and the C# compiler can convert the integer values 1 and 2 to *double* values:

```
var numbers = new[]{1, 2, 3.5, 99.999};
```

Generally, it is best to avoid mixing types and hoping that the compiler will convert them for you.

Implicitly typed arrays are most useful when you are working with anonymous types, as described in [Chapter 7](#). The following code creates an array of anonymous objects, each containing two fields specifying the name and age of the members of my family:

```
var names = new[] { new { Name = "John", Age = 47 },  
                    new { Name = "Diana", Age = 46 },  
                    new { Name = "James", Age = 20 },  
                    new { Name = "Francesca", Age = 18 } };
```

The fields in the anonymous types must be the same for each element of the array.

## Accessing an individual array element

To access an individual array element, you must provide an index indicating which element you require. Array indexes are zero-based; thus, the initial element of an array lives at index 0 and not index 1. An index value of 1 accesses the second element. For example, you can read the contents of element 2 of the *pins* array into an *int* variable by using the following code:

```
int myPin;  
myPin = pins[2];
```

Similarly, you can change the contents of an array by assigning a value to an indexed element:

indexed element.

```
myPin = 1645;  
pins[2] = myPin;
```

All array element access is bounds-checked. If you specify an index that is less than 0 or greater than or equal to the length of the array, the compiler throws an *IndexOutOfRangeException* exception, as in this example:

```
try  
{  
    int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };  
    Console.WriteLine(pins[4]); // error, the 4th and last element is at index 3  
}  
catch (IndexOutOfRangeException ex)  
{  
    ...  
}
```

## Iterating through an array

All arrays are actually instances of the *System.Array* class in the Microsoft .NET Framework, and this class defines a number of useful properties and methods. For example, you can query the *Length* property to discover how many elements an array contains and iterate through all the elements of an array by using a *for* statement. The following sample code writes the array element values of the *pins* array to the console:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };  
for (int index = 0; index < pins.Length; index++)  
{  
    int pin = pins[index];  
    Console.WriteLine(pin);  
}
```

### NOTE

*Length* is a property and not a method, which is why you don't use parentheses when you call it. You can learn about properties in [Chapter 15](#).

It is common for new programmers to forget that arrays start at element 0 and that the last element is numbered *Length* – 1. C# provides the *foreach* statement with which you can iterate through the elements of an array without worrying about these issues. For example, here's the preceding *for* statement rewritten as an equivalent *foreach* statement:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };
foreach (int pin in pins)
{
    Console.WriteLine(pin);
}
```

The *foreach* statement declares an iteration variable (in this example, *int pin*) that automatically acquires the value of each element in the array. The type of this variable must match the type of the elements in the array. The *foreach* statement is the preferred way to iterate through an array; it expresses the intention of the code directly, and all of the *for* loop scaffolding drops away. However, in a few cases, you'll find that you have to revert to a *for* statement:

- A *foreach* statement always iterates through the entire array. If you want to iterate through only a known portion of an array (for example, the first half) or bypass certain elements (for example, every third element), it's easier to use a *for* statement.
- A *foreach* statement always iterates from index 0 through index *Length* – 1. If you want to iterate backward or in some other sequence, it's easier to use a *for* statement.
- If the body of the loop needs to know the index of the element rather than just the value of the element, you'll have to use a *for* statement.
- If you need to modify the elements of the array, you'll have to use a *for* statement. This is because the iteration variable of the *foreach* statement is a readonly copy of each element of the array.

#### TIP

It's perfectly safe to attempt to iterate through a zero-length array by using a *foreach* statement.

You can declare the iteration variable as a *var* and let the C# compiler work out the type of the variable from the type of the elements in the array. This is especially useful if you don't actually know the type of the elements in the array, such as when the array contains anonymous objects. The following example demonstrates how you can iterate through the array of family members shown earlier:

```
var names = new[] { new { Name = "John", Age = 47 },
                    new { Name = "Diana", Age = 46 },
                    new { Name = "James", Age = 20 },
                    new { Name = "Francesca", Age = 18 } };
foreach (var familyMember in names)
{
    Console.WriteLine("Name: {0}, Age: {1}", familyMember.Name, familyMember.Age);
}
```

## Passing arrays as parameters and return values for a method

You can define methods that take arrays as parameters or pass them back as return values.

The syntax for passing an array as a parameter is much the same as declaring an array. For example, the code sample that follows defines a method called *ProcessData* that takes an array of integers as a parameter. The body of the method iterates through the array and performs some unspecified processing on each element:

```
public void ProcessData(int[] data)
{
    foreach (int i in data)
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

It is important to remember that arrays are reference objects, so if you modify the contents of an array passed as a parameter inside a method such as

*ProcessData*, the modification is visible through all references to the array, including the original argument passed as the parameter.

To return an array from a method, you specify the type of the array as the return type. In the method, you create and populate the array. The following example prompts the user for the size of an array, followed by the data for each element. The array created by the method is passed back as the return value:

```
public int[] ReadData()
{
    Console.WriteLine("How many elements?");
    string reply = Console.ReadLine();
    int numElements = int.Parse(reply);
    int[] data = new int[numElements];
    for (int i = 0; i < numElements; i++)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Enter data for element {0}", i);
        reply = Console.ReadLine();
        int elementData = int.Parse(reply);
        data[i] = elementData;
    }
    return data;
}
```

You can call the *ReadData* method like this:

```
int[] data = ReadData();
```

### ARRAY PARAMETERS AND THE MAIN METHOD

You might have noticed that the *Main* method for an application takes an array of strings as a parameter:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    ...
}
```

Remember that the *Main* method is called when your program starts running; it is the entry point of your application. If you start the application from the command line, you can specify additional command-line arguments. The Microsoft Windows operating system passes these arguments to the Common Language Runtime (CLR), which in turn passes them as arguments to the *Main* method. This mechanism gives you a simple way to provide a user with a way to give information when an

application starts running rather than prompting the user interactively, which is useful if you want to build utilities that can be run from automated scripts.

The following example is taken from a utility application called `MyFileUtil` that processes files. It expects a set of file names on the command line, and it calls the *ProcessFile* method (not shown) to handle each file specified:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    foreach (string filename in args)
    {
        ProcessFile(filename);
    }
}
```

The user can run the `MyFileUtil` application from the command line like this:

```
MyFileUtil C:\Temp\TestData.dat C:\Users\John\Documents\MyDoc.txt
```

Each command line argument is separated by a space. It is up to the `MyFileUtil` application to verify that these arguments are valid.

## Copying arrays

Arrays are reference types (remember that an array is an instance of the *System.Array* class). An array variable contains a reference to an array instance. This means that when you copy an array variable, you actually end up with two references to the same array instance, as demonstrated in the following example:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };
int[] alias = pins; // alias and pins refer to the same array instance
```

In this example, if you modify the value at *pins[1]*, the change will also be visible by reading *alias[1]*.

If you want to make a copy of the array instance (the data on the heap) that an array variable refers to, you have to do two things. First, you create a new array instance of the same type and the same length as the array you are copying. Second, you copy the data element by element from the original array to the new array, as in this example:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };
int[] copy = new int[pins.Length];
for (int i = 0; i < pins.Length; i++)
{
    copy[i] = pins[i];
}
```

Note that this code uses the *Length* property of the original array to specify the size of the new array.

Copying an array is actually a common requirement of many applications—so much so that the *System.Array* class provides some useful methods that you can employ to copy an array rather than writing your own code. For example, the *CopyTo* method copies the contents of one array into another array given a specified starting index. The following example copies all the elements from the *pins* array to the *copy* array starting at element zero:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };
int[] copy = new int[pins.Length];
pins.CopyTo(copy, 0);
```

Another way to copy the values is to use the *System.Array* static method named *Copy*. As with *CopyTo*, you must initialize the target array before calling *Copy*:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };
int[] copy = new int[pins.Length];
Array.Copy(pins, copy, copy.Length);
```

#### NOTE

Ensure that you specify a valid value for the length parameter of the *Array.Copy* method. If you provide a negative value, the method throws an *ArgumentOutOfRangeException* exception. If you specify a value that is greater than the number of elements in the source array, the method throws an *ArgumentException* exception.

Yet another alternative is to use the *System.Array* instance method named *Clone*. You can call this method to create an entire array and copy it in one action:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };
int[] copy = (int[])pins.Clone();
```



#### NOTE

*Clone* methods are described in [Chapter 8](#). The *Clone* method of the *Array* class returns an *object* rather than *Array*, which is why you must cast it to an array of the appropriate type when you use it. Furthermore, the *Clone*, *CopyTo*, and *Copy* methods all create a *shallow* copy of an array (shallow and deep copying are also described in [Chapter 8](#)). If the elements in the array being copied contain references, the *Clone* method simply copies the references rather than the objects being referred to. After copying, both arrays refer to the same set of objects. If you need to create a deep copy of such an array, you must use appropriate code in a *for* loop.

## Using multidimensional arrays

The arrays shown so far have contained a single dimension, and you can think of them as simple lists of values. You can create arrays with more than one dimension. For example, to create a two-dimensional array, you specify an array that requires two integer indexes. The following code creates a two-dimensional array of 24 integers called *items*. If it helps, you can think of the array as a table with the first dimension specifying a number of rows, and the second specifying a number of columns.

```
int[,] items = new int[4, 6];
```

To access an element in the array, you provide two index values to specify the “cell” holding the element. (A cell is the intersection of a row and a column.) The following code shows some examples using the *items* array:

```
items[2, 3] = 99;           // set the element at cell(2,3) to 99
items[2, 4] = items [2,3]; // copy the element in cell(2, 3) to cell(2, 4)
items[2, 4]++;             // increment the integer value at cell(2, 4)
```

There is no limit on the number of dimensions that you can specify for an array. The next code example creates and uses an array called *cube* that contains three dimensions. Notice that you must specify three indexes to access each element in the array.

```
int[, ,] cube = new int[5, 5, 5];
cube[1, 2, 1] = 101;
cube[1, 2, 2] = cube[1, 2, 1] * 3;
```

At this point, it is worth giving a word of caution about creating arrays with more than three dimensions. Specifically, arrays can consume a lot of memory. The *cube* array contains 125 elements ( $5 * 5 * 5$ ). A four-dimensional array for which each dimension has a size of 5 contains 625 elements. If you start to create arrays with three or more dimensions, you can soon run out of memory. Therefore, you should always be prepared to catch and handle *OutOfMemoryException* exceptions when you use multidimensional arrays.

## Creating jagged arrays

In C#, ordinary multidimensional arrays are sometimes referred to as *rectangular* arrays. Each dimension has a regular shape. For example, in the following tabular two-dimensional *items* array, every row has a column containing 40 elements, and there are 160 elements in total:

```
int[,] items = new int[4, 40];
```

As mentioned in the previous section, multidimensional arrays can consume a lot of memory. If the application uses only some of the data in each column, allocating memory for unused elements is a waste. In this scenario, you can use a *jagged* array, for which each column has a different length, like this:

```
int[][] items = new int[4][];  
int[] columnForRow0 = new int[3];  
int[] columnForRow1 = new int[10];  
int[] columnForRow2 = new int[40];  
int[] columnForRow3 = new int[25];  
items[0] = columnForRow0;  
items[1] = columnForRow1;  
items[2] = columnForRow2;  
items[3] = columnForRow3;  
...
```

In this example, the application requires only 3 elements in the first column, 10 elements in the second column, 40 elements in the third column, and 25 elements in the final column. This code illustrates an array of arrays—rather than *items* being a two-dimensional array, it has only a single dimension, but the elements in that dimension are themselves arrays. Furthermore, the total size of the *items* array is 78 elements rather than 160; no space is allocated for elements

that the application is not going to use.

It is worth highlighting some of the syntax in this example. The following declaration specifies that *items* is an array of arrays of *int*.

```
int[][] items;
```

The following statement initializes *items* to hold four elements, each of which is an array of indeterminate length:

```
items = new int[4][];
```

The arrays *columnForRow0* to *columnForRow3* are all single-dimensional *int* arrays, initialized to hold the required amount of data for each column. Finally, each column array is assigned to the appropriate elements in the *items* array, like this:

```
items[0] = columnForRow0;
```

Recall that arrays are reference objects, so this statement simply adds a reference to *columnForRow0* to the first element in the *items* array; it does not actually copy any data. You can populate data in this column either by assigning a value to an indexed element in *columnForRow0* or by referencing it through the *items* array. The following statements are equivalent:

```
columnForRow0[1] = 99;  
items[0][1] = 99;
```

You can extend this idea further if you want to create arrays of arrays of arrays rather than rectangular three-dimensional arrays, and so on.

#### NOTE

If you have written code using the Java programming language in the past, you should be familiar with this concept. Java does not have multidimensional arrays; instead, you can create arrays of arrays exactly as just described.

In the following exercise, you will use arrays to implement an application that

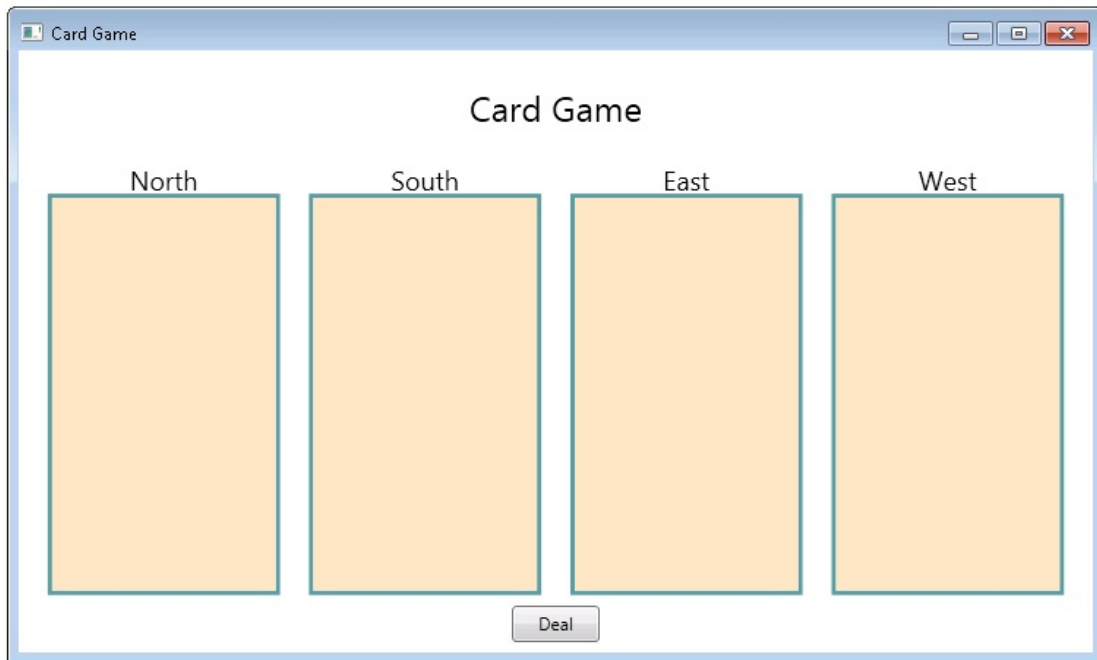
deals playing cards as part of a card game. The application displays a form with four hands of cards dealt at random from a regular (52-card) pack of playing cards. You will complete the code that deals the cards for each hand.

Use arrays to implement a card game

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Cards project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 10\Windows X\Cards folder in your Documents folder.
3. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.

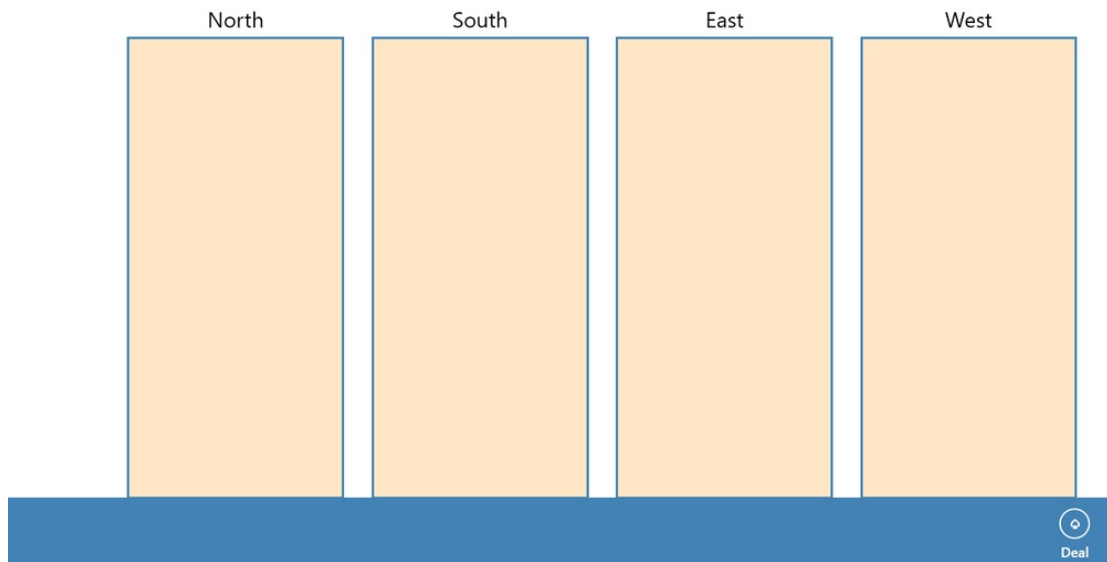
A form appears with the caption Card Game, four text boxes (labeled North, South, East, and West), and a button with the caption Deal.

If you are using Windows 7, the form looks like this:



If you are using Windows 8.1, the Deal button is on the app bar rather than on the main form, and the application looks like this:

## Card Game



### NOTE

This is the preferred mechanism for locating command buttons in Windows Store apps, and from here on all Windows Store apps presented in this book will follow this style.

#### 4. Click Deal.

Nothing happens. You have not yet implemented the code that deals the cards; this is what you will do in this exercise.

5. Return to Visual Studio 2013. On the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.
6. In Solution Explorer, locate the Value.cs file. Open this file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file contains an enumeration called *Value*, which represents the different values that a card can have, in ascending order:

```
enum Value { Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Jack,
Queen, King,
Ace }
```

7. Open the `Suit.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file contains an enumeration called *Suit*, which represents the suits of cards in a regular pack:

```
enum Suit { Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades }
```

8. Display the `PlayingCard.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file contains the *PlayingCard* class. This class models a single playing card.

```
class PlayingCard
{
    private readonly Suit suit;
    private readonly Value value;
    public PlayingCard(Suit s, Value v)
    {
        this.suit = s;
        this.value = v;
    }
    public override string ToString()
    {
        string result = string.Format("{0} of {1}", this.value, this.suit);
        return result;
    }
    public Suit CardSuit()
    {
        return this.suit;
    }
    public Value CardValue()
    {
        return this.value;
    }
}
```

This class has two *readonly* fields that represent the value and suit of the card. The constructor initializes these fields.

#### NOTE

A *readonly* field is useful for modeling data that should not change after it has been initialized. You can assign a value to a *readonly* field by using an initializer when you declare it, or in a constructor, but thereafter you cannot change it.

The class contains a pair of methods called *CardValue* and *CardSuit* that return this information, and it overrides the *ToString* method to return a string representation of the card.

**NOTE**

The *CardValue* and *CardSuit* methods are actually better implemented as properties, which you learn how to do in [Chapter 15](#).

9. Open the *Pack.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file contains the *Pack* class, which models a pack of playing cards. At the top of the *Pack* class are two public *const int* fields called *NumSuits* and *CardsPerSuit*. These two fields specify the number of suits in a pack of cards and the number of cards in each suit. The private *cardPack* variable is a two-dimensional array of *PlayingCard* objects. You will use the first dimension to specify the suit and the second dimension to specify the value of the card in the suit. The *randomCardSelector* variable is a random number generated based on the *Random* class. You will use the *randomCardSelector* variable to help shuffle the cards before they are dealt to each hand.

```
class Pack
{
    public const int NumSuits = 4;
    public const int CardsPerSuit = 13;
    private PlayingCard[,] cardPack;
    private Random randomCardSelector = new Random();
    ...
}
```

10. Locate the default constructor for the *Pack* class. Currently, this constructor is empty apart from a *// TODO:* comment. Delete the comment, and add the following statement shown in bold to instantiate the *cardPack* array with the appropriate values for each dimension:

```
public Pack()
{
    this.cardPack = new PlayingCard[NumSuits, CardsPerSuit];
}
```

11. Add the following code shown in bold to the *Pack* constructor. These statements populate the *cardPack* array with a full, sorted deck of cards.

```
public Pack()
{
    this.cardPack = new PlayingCard[NumSuits, CardsPerSuit];
    for (Suit suit = Suit.Clubs; suit <= Suit.Spades; suit++)
    {
        for (Value value = Value.Two; value <= Value.Ace; value++)
        {
            this.cardPack[(int)suit, (int)value] = new PlayingCard(suit,
value);
        }
    }
}
```

The outer *for* loop iterates through the list of values in the *Suit* enumeration, and the inner loop iterates through the values each card can have in each suit. The inner loop creates a new *PlayingCard* object of the specified suit and value, and adds it to the appropriate element in the *cardPack* array.

#### NOTE

You must use one of the integer types as indexes into an array. The *suit* and *value* variables are enumeration variables. However, enumerations are based on the integer types, so it is safe to cast them to *int* as shown in the code.

12. Find the *DealCardFromPack* method in the *Pack* class. The purpose of this method is to pick a random card from the pack, remove the card from the pack to prevent it from being selected again, and then pass it back as the return value from the method.

The first task in this method is to pick a suit at random. Delete the comment and the statement that throws the *NotImplementedException*



exception from this method and replace them with the following statement shown in bold:

```
public PlayingCard DealCardFromPack()
{
    Suit suit = (Suit)randomCardSelector.Next(NumSuits);
}
```

This statement uses the *Next* method of the *randomCardSelector* random number generator object to return a random number corresponding to a suit. The parameter to the *Next* method specifies the exclusive upper bound of the range to use; the value selected is between 0 and this value minus 1. Note that the value returned is an *int*, so it has to be cast before you can assign it a *Suit* variable.

There is always the possibility that there are no more cards left of the selected suit. You need to handle this situation and pick another suit if necessary.

13. After the code that selects a suit at random, add the *while* loop that follows (shown in bold).

This loop calls the *IsSuitEmpty* method to determine whether there are any cards of the specified suit left in the pack (you will implement the logic for this method shortly). If not, it picks another suit at random (it might actually pick the same suit again) and checks again. The loop repeats the process until it finds a suit with at least one card left.

```
public PlayingCard DealCardFromPack()
{
    Suit suit = (Suit)randomCardSelector.Next(NumSuits);
    while (this.IsSuitEmpty(suit))
    {
        suit = (Suit)randomCardSelector.Next(NumSuits);
    }
}
```

14. You have now selected a suit at random with at least one card left. The next task is to pick a card at random in this suit. You can use the random number generator to select a card value, but as before, there is no guarantee

that the card with the chosen value has not already been dealt. However, you can use the same idiom as before: call the *IsCardAlreadyDealt* method (which you will examine and complete later) to determine whether the card has been dealt before, and if so, pick another card at random and try again, repeating the process until a card is found. To do this, add the following statements shown in bold to the *DealCardFromPack* method, after the existing code:

```
public PlayingCard DealCardFromPack()
{
    ...
    Value value = (Value)randomCardSelector.Next(CardsPerSuit);
    while (this.IsCardAlreadyDealt(suit, value))
    {
        value = (Value)randomCardSelector.Next(CardsPerSuit);
    }
}
```

15. You have now selected a random playing card that has not been dealt previously. Add the following code to the end of the *DealCardFromPack* method to return this card and set the corresponding element in the *cardPack* array to *null*:

```
public PlayingCard DealCardFromPack()
{
    ...
    PlayingCard card = this.cardPack[(int)suit, (int)value];
    this.cardPack[(int)suit, (int)value] = null;
    return card;
}
```

16. Locate the *IsSuitEmpty* method. Remember that the purpose of this method is to take a *Suit* parameter and return a Boolean value indicating whether there are any more cards of this suit left in the pack. Delete the comment and the statement that throws the *NotImplementedException* exception from this method, and add the following code shown in bold:

```
private bool IsSuitEmpty(Suit suit)
{
    bool result = true;
```

```

    for (Value value = Value.Two; value <= Value.Ace; value++)
    {
        if (!IsCardAlreadyDealt(suit, value))
        {
            result = false;
            break;
        }
    }
    return result;
}

```

This code iterates through the possible card values and determines whether there is a card left in the *cardPack* array that has the specified suit and value by using the *IsCardAlreadyDealt* method, which you will complete in the next step. If the loop finds a card, the value in the *result* variable is set to *false* and the *break* statement causes the loop to terminate. If the loop completes without finding a card, the *result* variable remains set to its initial value of *true*. The value of the *result* variable is passed back as the return value of the method.

17. Find the *IsCardAlreadyDealt* method. The purpose of this method is to determine whether the card with the specified suit and value has already been dealt and removed from the pack. You will see later that when the *DealFromPack* method deals a card, it removes the card from the *cardPack* array and sets the corresponding element to *null*. Replace the comment and the statement that throws the *NotImplementedException* exception in this method with the code shown in bold:

```

private bool IsCardAlreadyDealt(Suit suit, Value value)
{
    return (this.cardPack[(int)suit, (int)value] == null);
}

```

This statement returns *true* if the element in the *cardPack* array corresponding to the suit and value is *null*, and it returns *false* otherwise.

18. The next step is to add the selected playing card to a hand. Open the *Hand.cs* file, and display it in the Code and Text Editor window. This file contains the *Hand* class, which implements a hand of cards (that is, all

cards dealt to one player).

This file contains a *public const int* field called *HandSize*, which is set to the size of a hand of cards (13). It also contains an array of *PlayingCard* objects, which is initialized by using the *HandSize* constant. The *playingCardCount* field will be used by your code to keep track of how many cards the hand currently contains as it is being populated.

```
class Hand
{
    public const int HandSize = 13;
    private PlayingCard[] cards = new PlayingCard[HandSize];
    private int playingCardCount = 0;
    ...
}
```

The *ToString* method generates a string representation of the cards in the hand. It uses a *foreach* loop to iterate through the items in the *cards* array and calls the *ToString* method on each *PlayingCard* object it finds. These strings are concatenated together with a newline character in between (the `\n` character) for formatting purposes.

```
public override string ToString()
{
    string result = "";
    foreach (PlayingCard card in this.cards)
    {
        result += card.ToString() + "\n";
    }
    return result;
}
```

19. Locate the *AddCardToHand* method in the *Hand* class. The purpose of this method is to add the playing card specified as the parameter to the hand. Add the following statements shown in bold to this method:

```
public void AddCardToHand(PlayingCard cardDealt)
{
    if (this.playingCardCount >= HandSize)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException("Too many cards");
    }
}
```

```

    }
    this.cards[this.playingCardCount] = cardDealt;
    this.playingCardCount++;
}

```

This code first checks to ensure that the hand is not already full. If the hand is full, it throws an *ArgumentException* exception (this should never occur, but it is good practice to be safe). Otherwise, the card is added to the *cards* array at the index specified by the *playingCardCount* variable, and this variable is then incremented.

20. In Solution Explorer, expand the MainWindow.xaml node and then open the MainWindow.xaml.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This is the code for the Card Game window. Locate the *dealClick* method. This method runs when the user clicks the Deal button. Currently, it contains an empty *try* block and an exception handler that displays a message if an exception occurs.

21. Add the following statement shown in bold to the *try* block:

```

private void dealClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        pack = new Pack();
    }
    catch (Exception ex)
    {
        ...
    }
}

```

This statement simply creates a new pack of cards. You saw earlier that this class contains a two-dimensional array holding the cards in the pack, and the constructor populates this array with the details of each card. You now need to create four hands of cards from this pack.

22. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *try* block:

```

try

```

```

{
    pack = new Pack();
    for (int handNum = 0; handNum < NumHands; handNum++)
    {
        hands[handNum] = new Hand();
    }
}
catch (Exception ex)
{
    ...
}

```

This *for* loop creates four hands from the pack of cards and stores them in an array called *hands*. Each hand is initially empty, so you need to deal the cards from the pack to each hand.

23. Add the following code shown in bold to the *for* loop:

```

try
{
    ...
    for (int handNum = 0; handNum < NumHands; handNum++)
    {
        hands[handNum] = new Hand();
        for (int numCards = 0; numCards < Hand.HandSize; numCards++)
        {
            PlayingCard cardDealt = pack.DealCardFromPack();
            hands[handNum].AddCardToHand(cardDealt);
        }
    }
}
catch (Exception ex)
{
    ...
}

```

The inner *for* loop populates each hand by using the *DealCardFromPack* method to retrieve a card at random from the pack and the *AddCardToHand* method to add this card to a hand.

24. Add the following code shown in bold after the outer *for* loop:

```

try

```

```

{
    ...
    for (int handNum = 0; handNum < NumHands; handNum++)
    {
        ...
    }
    north.Text = hands[0].ToString();
    south.Text = hands[1].ToString();
    east.Text = hands[2].ToString();
    west.Text = hands[3].ToString();
}
catch (Exception ex)
{
    ...
}

```

When all the cards have been dealt, this code displays each hand in the text boxes on the form. These text boxes are called *north*, *south*, *east*, and *west*. The code uses the *ToString* method of each hand to format the output.

If an exception occurs at any point, the *catch* handler displays a message box with the error message for the exception.

25. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging. When the Card Game window appears, click Deal.

The cards in the pack should be dealt at random to each hand, and the cards in each hand should be displayed on the form, as shown in the following image:

## Card Game

North	South	East	West
Seven of Diamonds Queen of Diamonds Ten of Spades King of Diamonds King of Spades Five of Diamonds Queen of Spades Five of Spades Six of Diamonds Ace of Clubs Jack of Clubs Six of Clubs Six of Spades	Two of Hearts Five of Clubs Ace of Spades Three of Clubs Four of Spades Jack of Hearts Nine of Diamonds Two of Clubs Ten of Diamonds Seven of Clubs Nine of Clubs Four of Diamonds Jack of Spades	Seven of Spades Four of Clubs Six of Hearts Nine of Spades Eight of Spades King of Clubs Two of Spades Eight of Hearts Queen of Clubs Five of Hearts Jack of Diamonds Three of Hearts Eight of Clubs	Ten of Hearts Two of Diamonds Three of Spades Ten of Clubs Ace of Diamonds Three of Diamonds Four of Hearts Queen of Hearts Seven of Hearts Ace of Hearts Eight of Diamonds King of Hearts Nine of Hearts

Deal

26. Click Deal again. Verify that a new set of hands is dealt and the cards in each hand change.
27. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to create and use arrays to manipulate sets of data. You saw how to declare and initialize arrays, access data held in arrays, pass arrays as parameters to methods, and return arrays from methods. You also learned how to create multidimensional arrays and how to use arrays of arrays.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 11**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

--	--



To	Do this
Declare an array variable	<p>Write the name of the element type, followed by square brackets, followed by the name of the variable, followed by a semicolon. For example:</p> <pre>bool[] flags;</pre>
Create an instance of an array	<p>Write the keyword <code>new</code>, followed by the name of the element type, followed by the size of the array enclosed in square brackets. For example:</p> <pre>bool[] flags = new bool[10];</pre>
Initialize the elements of an array to specific values	<p>For an array, write the specific values in a comma-separated list enclosed in braces. For example:</p> <pre>bool[] flags = { true, false, true, false };</pre>
Find the number of elements in an array	<p>Use the <code>Length</code> property. For example:</p> <pre>int [] flags = ...; ... int noOfElements = flags.Length;</pre>
Access a single array element	<p>Write the name of the array variable, followed by the integer index of the element enclosed in square brackets. Remember, array indexing starts at 0, not 1. For example:</p> <pre>bool initialElement = flags[0];</pre>
Iterate through the elements of an array	<p>Use a <code>for</code> statement or a <code>foreach</code> statement. For example:</p> <pre>bool[] flags = { true, false, true, false }; for (int i = 0; i &lt; flags.Length; i++) {     Console.WriteLine(flags[i]); } foreach (bool flag in flags) {     Console.WriteLine(flag); }</pre>

Declare a multidimensional array variable	<p>Write the name of the element type, followed by a set of square brackets with a comma separator indicating the number of dimensions, followed by the name of the variable, followed by a semicolon. For example, use the following to create a two-dimensional array called table and initialize it to hold 4 rows of 6 columns:</p> <pre>int[,] table; table = new int[4,6];</pre>
Declare a jagged array variable	<p>Declare the variable as an array of child arrays. You can initialize each child array to have a different length. For example, use the following to create a jagged array called items and initialize each child array:</p> <pre>int[][] items; items = new int[4][]; items[0] = new int[3]; items[1] = new int[10]; items[2] = new int[40]; items[3] = new int[25];</pre>

# Chapter 11. Understanding parameter arrays

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Declaring a *params* Array
- Using *params object[ ]*
- Comparing parameter arrays and optional parameters

Parameter arrays are useful if you want to write methods that can take any number of arguments, possibly of different types, as parameters. If you are familiar with object-oriented concepts, you might be grinding your teeth in frustration at the previous sentence. After all, the object-oriented approach to solving this problem is to define overloaded methods. However, overloading is not always the most suitable approach, especially if you need to create a method that can take a truly variable number of parameters, each of which might vary in type whenever the method is invoked. This chapter describes how you can use parameter arrays to address situations such as this.

## Overloading—a recap

*Overloading* is the technical term for declaring two or more methods with the same name in the same scope. Being able to overload a method is very useful for cases in which you want to perform the same action on arguments of different types. The classic example of overloading in Microsoft Visual C# is the *Console.WriteLine* method. This method is overloaded numerous times so that you can pass any primitive type argument. The following code example illustrates some of the ways in which the *WriteLine* method is defined in the *Console* class:

```

class Console
{
    public static void WriteLine(Int32 value)
    public static void WriteLine(Double value)
    public static void WriteLine(Decimal value)
    public static void WriteLine(Boolean value)
    public static void WriteLine(String value)
    ...
}

```

#### NOTE

The documentation for the *WriteLine* method uses the structure types defined in the *System* namespace for its parameters rather than the C# aliases for these types. For example, the overload that prints out the value for an *int* actually takes an *Int32* as the parameter. Refer to [Chapter 9](#) for a list of the structure types and their mappings to C# aliases for these types.

As useful as overloading is, it doesn't cover every case. In particular, overloading doesn't easily handle a situation in which the type of parameters doesn't vary but the number of parameters does. For example, what if you want to write many values to the console? Do you have to provide versions of *Console.WriteLine* that can take two parameters of various combinations, other versions that can take three parameters, and so on? That would quickly become tedious. And, wouldn't the massive duplication of all these overloaded methods worry you? It should. Fortunately, there is a way to write a method that takes a variable number of arguments (a *variadic method*): you can use a parameter array (a parameter declared by using the *params* keyword).

To understand how *params* arrays solve this problem, it helps to first understand the uses and shortcomings of ordinary arrays.

## Using array arguments

Suppose that you want to write a method to determine the minimum value in a set of values passed as parameters. One way is to use an array. For example, to find the smallest of several *int* values, you could write a static method named *Min* with a single parameter representing an array of *int* values:

```

class Util
-

```

```

{
    public static int Min(int[] paramList)
    {
        // Verify that the caller has provided at least one parameter.
        // If not, throw an ArgumentException exception - it is not possible
        // to find the smallest value in an empty list.
        if (paramList == null || paramList.Length == 0)
        {
            throw new ArgumentException("Util.Min: not enough arguments");
        }
        // Set the current minimum value found in the list of parameters to the
first item
        int currentMin = paramList[0];
        // Iterate through the list of parameters, searching to see whether any of
them
        // are smaller than the value held in currentMin
        foreach (int i in paramList)
        {
            // If the loop finds an item that is smaller than the value held in
            // currentMin, then set currentMin to this value
            if (i < currentMin)
            {
                currentMin = i;
            }
        }
        // At the end of the loop, currentMin holds the value of the smallest
        // item in the list of parameters, so return this value.
        return currentMin;
    }
}

```

#### NOTE

The *ArgumentException* class is specifically designed to be thrown by a method if the arguments supplied do not meet the requirements of the method.

To use the *Min* method to find the minimum of two *int* variables named *first* and *second*, you can write this:

```

int[] array = new int[2];
array[0] = first;
array[1] = second;
int min = Util.Min(array);

```

And to use the *Min* method to find the minimum of three *int* variables (named *first*, *second*, and *third*), you can write this:

```
int[] array = new int[3];
array[0] = first;
array[1] = second;
array[2] = third;
int min = Util.Min(array);
```

You can see that this solution avoids the need for a large number of overloads, but it does so at a price: you have to write additional code to populate the array that you pass in. You can, of course, use an anonymous array if you prefer, like this:

```
int min = Util.Min(new int[] {first, second, third});
```

However, the point is that you still need to create and populate an array, and the syntax can get a little confusing. The solution is to get the compiler to write some of this code for you by using a *params* array as the parameter to the *Min* method.

## Declaring a params Array

Using a *params* array, you can pass a variable number of arguments to a method. You indicate a *params* array by using the *params* keyword as an array parameter modifier when you define the method parameters. For example, here's *Min* again—this time with its array parameter declared as a *params* array:

```
class Util
{
    public static int Min(params int[] paramList)
    {
        // code exactly as before
    }
}
```

The effect of the *params* keyword on the *Min* method is that it makes it possible for you to call it by using any number of integer arguments without worrying about creating an array. For example, to find the minimum of two integer values,

you can simply write this:

```
int min = Util.Min(first, second);
```

The compiler translates this call into code similar to this:

```
int[] array = new int[2];  
array[0] = first;  
array[1] = second;  
int min = Util.Min(array);
```

To find the minimum of three integer values, you write the code shown here, which is also converted by the compiler to the corresponding code that uses an array:

```
int min = Util.Min(first, second, third);
```

Both calls to *Min* (one call with two arguments and another with three arguments) resolve to the same *Min* method with the *params* keyword. And, as you can probably guess, you can call this *Min* method with any number of *int* arguments. The compiler just counts the number of *int* arguments, creates an *int* array of that size, fills the array with the arguments, and then calls the method by passing the single array parameter.

#### NOTE

If you're a C or C++ programmer, you might recognize *params* as a type-safe equivalent of the *varargs* macros from the header file `stdarg.h`. Java also has a *varargs* facility that operates in a similar manner to the *params* keyword in C#.

There are several points worth noting about *params* arrays:

- You can't use the *params* keyword with multidimensional arrays. The code in the following example will not compile:

```
// compile-time error  
public static int Min(params int[,] table)  
...
```

- You can't overload a method based solely on the *params* keyword. The *params* keyword does not form part of a method's signature, as shown in this example:

```
// compile-time error: duplicate declaration
public static int Min(int[] paramList)
...
public static int Min(params int[] paramList)
...
```

- You're not allowed to specify the *ref* or *out* modifier with *params* arrays, as shown in this example:

```
// compile-time errors
public static int Min(ref params int[] paramList)
...
public static int Min(out params int[] paramList)
...
```

- A *params* array must be the last parameter. (This means that you can have only one *params* array per method.) Consider this example:

```
// compile-time error
public static int Min(params int[] paramList, int i)
...
```

- A non-*params* method always takes priority over a *params* method. This means that if you want to, you can still create an overloaded version of a method for the common cases, such as in the following example:

```
public static int Min(int leftHandSide, int rightHandSide)
...
public static int Min(params int[] paramList)
...
```

The first version of the *Min* method is used when called using two *int* arguments. The second version is used if any other number of *int* arguments is supplied. This includes the case in which the method is called with no arguments. Adding the non-*params* array method might be a useful optimization technique because the compiler won't have to create and populate so many arrays.



## Using *params object[]*

A parameter array of type *int* is very useful. With it, you can pass any number of *int* arguments in a method call. However, what if not only the number of arguments varies but also the argument type? C# has a way to solve this problem, too. The technique is based on the facts that *object* is the root of all classes and that the compiler can generate code that converts value types (things that aren't classes) to objects by using boxing, as described in [Chapter 8](#). You can use a parameters array of type *object* to declare a method that accepts any number of *object* arguments, allowing the arguments passed in to be of any type. Look at this example:

```
class Black
{
    public static void Hole(params object [] paramList)
    ...
}
```

I've called this method *Black.Hole*, because no argument can escape from it:

- You can pass the method no arguments at all, in which case the compiler will pass an object array whose length is 0:

```
Black.Hole();
// converted to Black.Hole(new object[0]);
```

- You can call the *Black.Hole* method by passing *null* as the argument. An array is a reference type, so you're allowed to initialize an array with *null*:

```
Black.Hole(null);
```

- You can pass the *Black.Hole* method an actual array. In other words, you can manually create the array normally generated by the compiler:

```
object[] array = new object[2];
array[0] = "forty two";
array[1] = 42;
Black.Hole(array);
```

- You can pass the *Black.Hole* method arguments of different types, and these

arguments will automatically be wrapped inside an *object* array:

```
Black.Hole("forty two", 42);  
//converted to Black.Hole(new object[]{"forty two", 42});
```

### THE *CONSOLE.WRITELINE* METHOD

The *Console* class contains many overloads for the *WriteLine* method. One of these overloads looks like this:

```
public static void WriteLine(string format, params Object[] arg);
```

This overload makes it possible for the *WriteLine* method to support a format string argument that contains placeholders, each of which can be replaced at run time with a variable of any type. Here's an example of a call to this method (the variables *fname* and *lname* are *strings*, *mi* is a *char*, and *age* is an *int*):

```
Console.WriteLine("Forename:{0}, Middle Initial:{1}, Last name:{2}, Age:{3}",  
fname,  
mi, lname, age);
```

The compiler resolves this call into the following:

```
Console.WriteLine("Forename:{0}, Middle Initial:{1}, Last name:{2}, Age:{3}",  
new  
object[4]{fname, mi, lname, age});
```

## Using a *params* array

In the following exercise, you will implement and test a *static* method named *Sum*. The purpose of this method is to calculate the sum of a variable number of *int* arguments passed to it, returning the result as an *int*. You will do this by writing *Sum* to take a *params int[]* parameter. You will implement two checks on the *params* parameter to ensure that the *Sum* method is completely robust. You will then call the *Sum* method with a variety of different arguments to test it.

Write a *params* array method

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.

2. Open the ParamsArray project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 11\Windows X\ParamArrays folder in your Documents folder.

The ParamsArray project contains the *Program* class in the Programs.cs file, including the *doWork* method framework that you have seen in previous chapters. You will implement the *Sum* method as a static method of another class called *Util* (short for “utility”), which you will add to the project.

3. In Solution Explorer, right-click the ParamsArray project in the ParamsArray solution, point to Add, and then click Class.
4. In the Add New Item – ParamsArray dialog box, in the middle pane, click the Class template. In the Name box, type **Util.cs**, and then click Add.

The Util.cs file is created and added to the project. It contains an empty class named *Util* in the *ParamsArray* namespace.

5. Add a public static method named *Sum* to the *Util* class. This method should return an *int* and accept a *params* array of *int* values named *paramList*. It should look like this:

```
public static int Sum(params int[] paramList)  
{  
}
```

The first step in implementing the *Sum* method is to check the *paramList* parameter. Apart from containing a valid set of integers, it can also be *null* or it can be an array of zero length. In both of these cases, it is difficult to calculate the sum, so the best option is to throw an *ArgumentException* exception. (You could argue that the sum of the integers in a zero-length array is 0 but treat this situation as an exception in this example.)

6. Add to *Sum* the following code shown in bold. This code throws an *ArgumentException* exception if *paramList* is *null*.

The *Sum* method should now look like this:

```

public static int Sum(params int[] paramList)
{
    if (paramList == null)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException("Util.Sum: null parameter list");
    }
}

```

7. Add code to the *Sum* method that throws an *ArgumentException* exception if the length of the parameter list *array* is 0, as shown here in bold:

```

public static int Sum(params int[] paramList)
{
    if (paramList == null)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException("Util.Sum: null parameter list");
    }
    if (paramList.Length == 0)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException("Util.Sum: empty parameter list");
    }
}

```

If the array passes these two tests, the next step is to add all the elements inside the array together. You can use a *foreach* statement to add all the elements together. You will need a local variable to hold the running total.

8. Declare an integer variable named *sumTotal*, and initialize it to 0, directly following the code from the preceding step.

```

public static int Sum(params int[] paramList)
{
    ...
    if (paramList.Length == 0)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException("Util.Sum: empty parameter list");
    }
    int sumTotal = 0;
}

```

9. Add a *foreach* statement to the *Sum* method to iterate through the *paramList* array. The body of this *foreach* loop should add each element in

the array to *sumTotal*. At the end of the method, return the value of *sumTotal* by using a *return* statement, as shown in bold here:

```
public static int Sum(params int[] paramList)
{
    ...
    int sumTotal = 0;
    foreach (int i in paramList)
    {
        sumTotal += i;
    }
    return sumTotal;
}
```

10. On the Build menu, click Build Solution, and then confirm that your solution builds without any errors.

Test the *Util.Sum* method

1. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. In the Code and Text Editor window, delete the *// TODO:* comment and add the following statement to the *doWork* method:

```
Console.WriteLine(Util.Sum(null));
```

3. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program builds and runs, writing the following message to the console:

```
Exception: Util.Sum: null parameter list
```

This confirms that the first check in the method works.

4. Press the Enter key to close the program and return to Visual Studio 2013.
5. In the Code and Text Editor window, change the call to *Console.WriteLine* in *doWork*, as shown here:

```
Console.WriteLine(Util.Sum());
```

This time, the method is called without any arguments. The compiler translates the empty argument list into an empty array.

6. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program builds and runs, writing the following message to the console:

```
Exception: Util.Sum: empty parameter list
```

This confirms that the second check in the method works.

7. Press the Enter key to close the program and return to Visual Studio 2013.
8. Change the call to *Console.WriteLine* in *doWork* as follows:

```
Console.WriteLine(Util.Sum(10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1));
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Verify that the program builds, runs, and writes the value 55 to the console.

10. Press Enter to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Comparing parameter arrays and optional parameters

**Chapter 3** illustrates how to define methods that take optional parameters. At first glance, it appears there is a degree of overlap between methods that use parameter arrays and methods that take optional parameters. However, there are fundamental differences between them:

- A method that takes optional parameters still has a fixed parameter list, and you cannot pass an arbitrary list of arguments. The compiler generates code that inserts the default values onto the stack for any missing arguments before the method runs, and the method is not aware of which of the arguments are caller provided and which are compiler-generated defaults.

- A method that uses a parameter array effectively has a completely arbitrary list of parameters, and none of them has a default value. Furthermore, the method can determine exactly how many arguments the caller provided.

Generally, you use parameter arrays for methods that can take any number of parameters (including none), whereas you use optional parameters only where it is not convenient to force a caller to provide an argument for every parameter.

There is one final question worth pondering. If you define a method that takes a parameter list and provide an overload that takes optional parameters, it is not always immediately apparent which version of the method will be called if the argument list in the calling statement matches both method signatures. You will investigate this scenario in the final exercise in this chapter.

Compare a *params* array and optional parameters

1. Return to the ParamsArray solution in Visual Studio 2013 and display the Util.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add the following *Console.WriteLine* statement shown in bold to the start of the *Sum* method in the *Util* class:

```
public static int Sum(params int[] paramList)
{
    Console.WriteLine("Using parameter list");
    ...
}
```

3. Add another implementation of the *Sum* method to the *Util* class. This version should take four optional *int* parameters, each with a default value of 0. In the body of the method, output the message “Using optional parameters” and then calculate and return the sum of the four parameters. The completed method should look like the following code in bold:

```
class Util
{
    ...
    public static int Sum(int param1 = 0, int param2 = 0, int param3 = 0, int param4 = 0)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Using optional parameters");
    }
}
```

```

        int sumTotal = param1 + param2 + param3 + param4;
        return sumTotal;
    }
}

```

4. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
5. In the *doWork* method, comment out the existing code and add the following statement:

```
Console.WriteLine(Util.Sum(2, 4, 6, 8));
```

This statement calls the *Sum* method, passing four *int* parameters. This call matches both overloads of the *Sum* method.

6. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the application.

When the application runs, it displays the following messages:

```
Using optional parameters
20

```

In this case, the compiler generated code which called the method that takes four optional parameters. This is the version of the method that most closely matches the method call.

7. Press Enter and return to Visual Studio.
8. In the *doWork* method, change the statement that calls the *Sum* method and remove the final argument (8), as shown here:

```
Console.WriteLine(Util.Sum(2, 4, 6));
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the application.

When the application runs, it displays the following messages:

```
Using optional parameters
10

```



The compiler still generated code that called the method that takes optional parameters, even though the method signature does not exactly match the call. Given a choice between a method that takes optional parameters and a method that takes a parameter list, the C# compiler will use the method that takes optional parameters.

10. Press Enter and return to Visual Studio.
11. In the *doWork* method, change the statement that calls the *Sum* method again and add two more arguments:

```
Console.WriteLine(Util.Sum(2, 4, 6, 8, 10));
```

12. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging to build and run the application.

When the application runs, it displays the following messages:

```
Using parameter list  
30
```

This time there are more arguments than the method that takes optional parameters specifies, so the compiler generated code that calls the method that takes a parameter array.

13. Press Enter and return to Visual Studio.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to use a *params* array to define a method that can take any number of arguments. You also saw how to use a *params* array of *object* types to create a method that accepts any number of arguments of any type. In addition, you saw how the compiler resolves method calls when it has a choice between calling a method that takes a parameter array and a method that takes optional parameters.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running,

and turn to [Chapter 12](#).

- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Write a method that accepts any number of arguments of a given type	Write a method whose parameter is a params array of the given type. For example, a method that accepts any number of bool arguments is declared like this:  <pre>someType Method(params bool[] flags) {     ... }</pre>
Write a method that accepts any number of arguments of any type	Write a method whose parameter is a params array whose elements are of type object. For example:  <pre>someType Method(params object[] paramList) {     ... }</pre>

# Chapter 12. Working with inheritance

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- What is inheritance?
- Declaring new methods
- Understanding *protected* access
- Understanding extension methods

Inheritance is a key concept in the world of object-oriented programming. You can use inheritance as a tool to avoid repetition when defining different classes that have a number of features in common and are quite clearly related to one another. Perhaps they are different classes of the same type, each with its own distinguishing feature—for example, *managers*, *manual workers*, and *all employees* of a factory. If you were writing an application to simulate the factory, how would you specify that managers and manual workers have a number of features that are the same but also have other features that are different? For example, they all have an employee reference number, but managers have different responsibilities and perform different tasks than manual workers.

This is where inheritance proves useful.

## What is inheritance?

If you ask several experienced programmers the meaning of the term *inheritance*, you will typically get different and conflicting answers. Part of the confusion stems from the fact that the word inheritance itself has several subtly different meanings. If someone bequeaths something to you in a will, you are

said to inherit it. Similarly, we say that you inherit half of your genes from your mother and half of your genes from your father. Both of these uses of the word have very little to do with inheritance in programming.

Inheritance in programming is all about classification—it's a relationship between classes. For example, when you were at school, you probably learned about mammals, and you learned that horses and whales are examples of mammals. Each has every attribute that a mammal does (it breathes air, it suckles its young, it is warm-blooded, and so on), but each also has its own special features (a horse has hooves, but a whale has flippers and a fluke).

How can you model a horse and a whale in a program? One way would be to create two distinct classes named *Horse* and *Whale*. Each class can implement the behaviors that are unique to that type of mammal, such as *Trot* (for a horse) or *Swim* (for a whale), in its own way. But how do you handle behaviors that are common to a horse and a whale, such as *Breathe* or *SuckleYoung*? You can add duplicate methods with these names to both classes, but this situation becomes a maintenance nightmare, especially if you also decide to start modeling other types of mammals, such as *Human* and *Aardvark*.

In C#, you can use class inheritance to address these issues. A horse, a whale, a human, and an aardvark are all types of mammals, so you can create a class named *Mammal* that provides the common functionality exhibited by these types. You can then declare that the *Horse*, *Whale*, *Human*, and *Aardvark* classes all inherit from *Mammal*. These classes then automatically include the functionality of the *Mammal* class (*Breathe*, *SuckleYoung*, and so on), but you can also augment each class with the functionality unique to a particular type of mammal to the corresponding class—the *Trot* method for the *Horse* class and the *Swim* method for the *Whale* class. If you need to modify the way in which a common method such as *Breathe* works, you need to change it in only one place, the *Mammal* class.

## Using inheritance

You declare that a class inherits from another class by using the following syntax:

```
class DerivedClass : BaseClass
```

```
{  
    ...  
}
```

The derived class inherits from the base class, and the methods in the base class become part of the derived class. In C#, a class is allowed to derive from, at most, one base class; a class is *not allowed* to derive from two or more classes. However, unless *DerivedClass* is declared as *sealed*, you can create further derived classes that inherit from *DerivedClass* using the same syntax. (You can learn about sealed classes in [Chapter 13](#).)

```
class DerivedSubClass : DerivedClass  
{  
    ...  
}
```

In the example described earlier, you could declare the *Mammal* class as shown in the example that follows. The methods *Breathe* and *SuckleYoung* are common to all mammals.

```
class Mammal  
{  
    public void Breathe()  
    {  
        ...  
    }  
    public void SuckleYoung()  
    {  
        ...  
    }  
    ...  
}
```

You could then define classes for each different type of mammal, adding more methods as necessary, such as in the following example:

```
class Horse : Mammal  
{  
    ...  
    public void Trot()  
    {  
        ...  
    }  
}
```

```

    }
}
class Whale : Mammal
{
    ...
    public void Swim()
    {
        ...
    }
}

```

#### NOTE

If you are a C++ programmer, you should notice that you do not and cannot explicitly specify whether the inheritance is public, private, or protected. C# inheritance is always implicitly public. If you're familiar with Java, note the use of the colon and that there is no *extends* keyword.

If you create a *Horse* object in your application, you can call the *Trot*, *Breathe*, and *SuckleYoung* methods:

```

Horse myHorse = new Horse();
myHorse.Trot();
myHorse.Breathe();
myHorse.SuckleYoung();

```

Similarly, you can create a *Whale* object, but this time you can call the *Swim*, *Breathe*, and *SuckleYoung* methods; *Trot* is not available because it is only defined in the *Horse* class.

#### IMPORTANT

Inheritance applies only to classes, not structures. You cannot define your own inheritance hierarchy with structures, and you cannot define a structure that derives from a class or another structure.

All structures actually inherit from an abstract class called *System.ValueType*. (Chapter 13 explores abstract classes.) This is purely an implementation detail of the way in which the Microsoft .NET Framework defines the common behavior for stack-based value types; you are unlikely to make direct use of *ValueType* in your own applications.

## The *System.Object* class revisited

The *System.Object* class is the root class of all classes. All classes implicitly derive from *System.Object*. Consequently, the C# compiler silently rewrites the *Mammal* class as the following code (which you can write explicitly if you really want to):

```
class Mammal : System.Object
{
    ...
}
```

Any methods in the *System.Object* class are automatically passed down the chain of inheritance to classes that derive from *Mammal*, such as *Horse* and *Whale*. What this means in practical terms is that all classes that you define automatically inherit all the features of the *System.Object* class. This includes methods such as *ToString* (discussed in [Chapter 2](#)), which is used to convert an object to a string, typically for display purposes.

## Calling base class constructors

In addition to the methods that it inherits, a derived class automatically contains all the fields from the base class. These fields usually require initialization when an object is created. You typically perform this kind of initialization in a constructor. Remember that all classes have at least one constructor. (If you don't provide one, the compiler generates a default constructor for you.) It is good practice for a constructor in a derived class to call the constructor for its base class as part of the initialization, which enables the base-class constructor to perform any additional initialization that it requires. You can specify the *base* keyword to call a base-class constructor when you define a constructor for an inheriting class, as shown in this example:

```
class Mammal // base class
{
    public Mammal(string name) // constructor for base class
    {
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```

```

class Horse : Mammal // derived class
{
    public Horse(string name)
        : base(name) // calls Mammal(name)
    {
        ...
    }
    ...
}

```

If you don't explicitly call a base class constructor in a derived-class constructor, the compiler attempts to silently insert a call to the base class's default constructor before executing the code in the derived-class constructor. Taking the earlier example, the compiler rewrites this

```

class Horse : Mammal
{
    public Horse(string name)
    {
        ...
    }
    ...
}

```

as this:

```

class Horse : Mammal
{
    public Horse(string name)
        : base()
    {
        ...
    }
    ...
}

```

This works if *Mammal* has a public default constructor. However, not all classes have a public default constructor (for example, remember that the compiler generates only a default constructor if you don't write any nondefault constructors), in which case forgetting to call the correct base class constructor results in a compile-time error.



## Assigning classes

Previous examples in this book show how to declare a variable by using a class type, and how to use the *new* keyword to create an object. There are also examples of how the type-checking rules of C# prevent you from assigning an object of one type to a variable declared as a different type. For example, given the definitions of the *Mammal*, *Horse*, and *Whale* classes shown here, the code that follows these definitions is illegal:

```
class Mammal
{
    ...
}
class Horse : Mammal
{
    ...
}
class Whale : Mammal
{
    ...
}
...
Horse myHorse = new Horse(...);
Whale myWhale = myHorse;           // error - different types
```

However, it is possible to refer to an object from a variable of a different type as long as the type used is a class that is higher up the inheritance hierarchy. So the following statements are legal:

```
Horse myHorse = new Horse(...);
Mammal myMammal = myHorse; // legal, Mammal is the base class of Horse
```

If you think about it in logical terms, all *Horses* are *Mammals*, so you can safely assign an object of type *Horse* to a variable of type *Mammal*. The inheritance hierarchy means that you can think of a *Horse* simply as a special type of *Mammal*; it has everything that a *Mammal* has with a few extra bits defined by any methods and fields you added to the *Horse* class. You can also make a *Mammal* variable refer to a *Whale* object. There is one significant limitation, however: When referring to a *Horse* or *Whale* object by using a *Mammal* variable, you can access only methods and fields that are defined by the *Mammal*

class. Any additional methods defined by the *Horse* or *Whale* class are not visible through the *Mammal* class.

```
Horse myHorse = new Horse(...);
Mammal myMammal = myHorse;
myMammal.Breathe();           // OK - Breathe is part of the Mammal class
myMammal.Trot();              // error - Trot is not part of the Mammal class
```

#### NOTE

The preceding discussion explains why you can assign almost anything to an *object* variable. Remember that *object* is an alias for *System.Object*, and all classes inherit from *System.Object*, either directly or indirectly.

Be warned that the converse situation is not true. You cannot unreservedly assign a *Mammal* object to a *Horse* variable:

```
Mammal myMammal = newMammal(...);
Horse myHorse = myMammal;    // error
```

This looks like a strange restriction, but remember that not all *Mammal* objects are *Horses*—some might be *Whales*. You can assign a *Mammal* object to a *Horse* variable as long as you check that the *Mammal* is really a *Horse* first, by using the *as* or *is* operator, or by using a cast ([Chapter 7](#) discusses the *is* and *as* operators and casts). The code example that follows uses the *as* operator to check that *myMammal* refers to a *Horse*, and if it does, the assignment to *myHorseAgain* results in *myHorseAgain* referring to the same *Horse* object. If *myMammal* refers to some other type of *Mammal*, the *as* operator returns *null*, instead.

```
Horse myHorse = new Horse(...);
Mammal myMammal = myHorse;           // myMammal refers to a Horse
...
Horse myHorseAgain = myMammal as Horse; // OK - myMammal was a Horse
...
Whale myWhale = new Whale(...);
myMammal = myWhale;
...
myHorseAgain = myMammal as Horse;     // returns null - myMammal was a Whale
```

## Declaring new methods

One of the hardest tasks in the realm of computer programming is thinking up unique and meaningful names for identifiers. If you are defining a method for a class and that class is part of an inheritance hierarchy, sooner or later you are going to try to reuse a name that is already in use by one of the classes further up the hierarchy. If a base class and a derived class happen to declare two methods that have the same signature, you will receive a warning when you compile the application.

### NOTE

The method signature refers to the name of the method and the number and types of its parameters, but not its return type. Two methods that have the same name and that take the same list of parameters have the same signature, even if they return different types.

A method in a derived class masks (or hides) a method in a base class that has the same signature. For example, if you compile the following code, the compiler generates a warning message informing you that *Horse.Talk* hides the inherited method *Mammal.Talk*:

```
class Mammal
{
    ...
    public void Talk() // assume that all mammals can talk
    {
        ...
    }
}
class Horse : Mammal
{
    ...
    public void Talk() // horses talk in a different way from other mammals!
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

Although your code will compile and run, you should take this warning seriously. If another class derives from *Horse* and calls the *Talk* method, it might

be expecting the method implemented in the *Mammal* class to be called. However, the *Talk* method in the *Horse* class hides the *Talk* method in the *Mammal* class, and the *Horse.Talk* method will be called, instead. Most of the time, such a coincidence is at best a source of confusion, and you should consider renaming methods to avoid clashes. However, if you're sure that you want the two methods to have the same signature, thus hiding the *Mammal.Talk* method, you can silence the warning by using the *new* keyword, as follows:

```
class Mammal
{
    ...
    public void Talk()
    {
        ...
    }
}
class Horse : Mammal
{
    ...
    new public void Talk()
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

Using the *new* keyword like this does not change the fact that the two methods are completely unrelated and that hiding still occurs. It just turns the warning off. In effect, the *new* keyword says, “I know what I’m doing, so stop showing me these warnings.”

## Declaring *virtual* methods

Sometimes, you do want to hide the way in which a method is implemented in a base class. As an example, consider the *ToString* method in *System.Object*. The purpose of *ToString* is to convert an object to its string representation. Because this method is very useful, it is a member of the *System.Object* class, thereby automatically providing all classes with a *ToString* method. However, how does the version of *ToString* implemented by *System.Object* know how to convert an instance of a derived class to a string? A derived class might contain any number of fields with interesting values that should be part of the string. The answer is

that the implementation of *ToString* in *System.Object* is actually a bit simplistic. All it can do is convert an object to a string that contains the name of its type, such as “Mammal” or “Horse.” This is not very useful after all. So why provide a method that is so useless? The answer to this second question requires a bit of detailed thought.

Obviously, *ToString* is a fine idea in concept, and all classes should provide a method that can be used to convert objects to strings for display or debugging purposes. It is only the implementation that requires attention. In fact, you are not expected to call the *ToString* method defined by *System.Object*; it is simply a placeholder. Instead, you might find it more useful to provide your own version of the *ToString* method in each class you define, overriding the default implementation in *System.Object*. The version in *System.Object* is there only as a safety net, in case a class does not implement or require its own specific version of the *ToString* method.

A method that is intended to be overridden is called a *virtual* method. You should be clear on the difference between *overriding* a method and *hiding* a method. Overriding a method is a mechanism for providing different implementations of the same method—the methods are all related because they are intended to perform the same task, but in a class-specific manner. Hiding a method is a means of replacing one method with another—the methods are usually unrelated and might perform totally different tasks. Overriding a method is a useful programming concept; hiding a method is often an error.

You can mark a method as a virtual method by using the *virtual* keyword. For example, the *ToString* method in the *System.Object* class is defined like this:

```
namespace System
{
    class Object
    {
        public virtual string ToString()
        {
            ...
        }
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```

#### NOTE

If you have experience developing in Java, you should note that C# methods are not virtual by default.

## Declaring *override* methods

If a base class declares that a method is *virtual*, a derived class can use the *override* keyword to declare another implementation of that method, as demonstrated here:

```
class Horse : Mammal
{
    ...
    public override string ToString()
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

The new implementation of the method in the derived class can call the original implementation of the method in the base class by using the *base* keyword, like this:

```
public override string ToString()
{
    base.ToString();
    ...
}
```

There are some important rules you must follow when declaring polymorphic methods (as discussed in the sidebar “Virtual methods and polymorphism”) by using the *virtual* and *override* keywords:

- A *virtual* method cannot be private; it is intended to be exposed to other classes through inheritance. Similarly, *override* methods cannot be private because a class cannot change the protection level of a method that it inherits. However, *override* methods can have a special form of privacy known as *protected access*, as you will find out in the next section.

- The signatures of the virtual and override methods must be identical; they must have the same name, number, and types of parameters. In addition, both methods must return the same type.
- You can only override a virtual method. If the base class method is not virtual and you try to override it, you'll get a compile-time error. This is sensible; it should be up to the designer of the base class to decide whether its methods can be overridden.
- If the derived class does not declare the method by using the *override* keyword, it does not override the base class method; it hides the method. In other words, it becomes an implementation of a completely different method that happens to have the same name. As before, this will cause a compile-time hiding warning, which you can silence by using the *new* keyword, as previously described.
- An *override* method is implicitly virtual and can itself be overridden in a further derived class. However, you are not allowed to explicitly declare that an *override* method is virtual by using the *virtual* keyword.

**VIRTUAL METHODS AND POLYMORPHISM VIRTUAL METHODS MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO CALL DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE SAME METHOD, BASED ON THE TYPE OF THE OBJECT DETERMINED DYNAMICALLY AT RUN TIME. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE CLASSES THAT DEFINE A VARIATION ON THE *MAMMAL* HIERARCHY DESCRIBED EARLIER:**

```

CLASS MAMMAL
{
    ...
    PUBLIC VIRTUAL STRING GETTYPENAME()
    {
        RETURN "THIS IS A MAMMAL";
    }
}
CLASS HORSE : MAMMAL
{
    ...
    PUBLIC OVERRIDE STRING GETTYPENAME()
    {
        RETURN "THIS IS A HORSE";
    }
}

```

```

        RETURN THIS IS A HORSE ;
    }
}
CLASS WHALE : MAMMAL
{
    ...
PUBLIC OVERRIDE STRING GETTYPENAME ()
{
    RETURN "THIS IS A WHALE";
}
}
CLASS AARDVARK : MAMMAL
{
    ...
}

```

THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT YOU SHOULD NOTE: FIRST, THE *OVERRIDE* KEYWORD USED BY THE *GETTYPENAME* METHOD IN THE *HORSE* AND *WHALE* CLASSES, AND SECOND, THE FACT THAT THE *AARDVARK* CLASS DOES NOT HAVE A *GETTYPENAME* METHOD.

NOW, EXAMINE THE FOLLOWING BLOCK OF CODE:

```

MAMMAL MYMAMMAL;
HORSE MYHORSE = NEW HORSE(...);
WHALE MYWHALE = NEW WHALE(...);
AARDVARK MYAARDVARK = NEW AARDVARK(...);
MYMAMMAL = MYHORSE;
CONSOLE.WRITELINE(MYMAMMAL.GETTYPENAME()); // HORSE
MYMAMMAL = MYWHALE;
CONSOLE.WRITELINE(MYMAMMAL.GETTYPENAME()); // WHALE
MYMAMMAL = MYAARDVARK;
CONSOLE.WRITELINE(MYMAMMAL.GETTYPENAME()); // AARDVARK

```

WHAT WILL BE OUTPUT BY THE THREE DIFFERENT *CONSOLE.WRITELINE* STATEMENTS? AT FIRST GLANCE, YOU WOULD EXPECT THEM ALL TO PRINT “THIS IS A MAMMAL,” BECAUSE EACH STATEMENT CALLS THE *GETTYPENAME* METHOD ON THE *MYMAMMAL* VARIABLE, WHICH IS A *MAMMAL*. HOWEVER, IN THE FIRST CASE, YOU CAN SEE THAT *MYMAMMAL* IS ACTUALLY A REFERENCE TO A *HORSE*. (REMEMBER, YOU ARE ALLOWED TO ASSIGN A *HORSE* TO A *MAMMAL* VARIABLE BECAUSE THE *HORSE* CLASS INHERITS FROM THE *MAMMAL* CLASS.) BECAUSE THE *GETTYPENAME* METHOD IS DEFINED AS *VIRTUAL*, THE RUNTIME WORKS OUT THAT IT SHOULD CALL THE *HORSE.GETTYPENAME* METHOD, SO THE STATEMENT ACTUALLY PRINTS THE MESSAGE “THIS IS A HORSE.” THE SAME LOGIC APPLIES TO THE SECOND *CONSOLE.WRITELINE* STATEMENT, WHICH OUTPUTS THE MESSAGE “THIS IS A WHALE.” THE THIRD STATEMENT CALLS *CONSOLE.WRITELINE* ON AN *AARDVARK* OBJECT.



HOWEVER, THE *AARDVARK* CLASS DOES NOT HAVE A *GETTYPE* METHOD, SO THE DEFAULT METHOD IN THE *MAMMAL* CLASS IS CALLED, RETURNING THE STRING "THIS IS A MAMMAL."

THIS PHENOMENON OF THE SAME STATEMENT INVOKING A DIFFERENT METHOD DEPENDING ON ITS CONTEXT IS CALLED *POLYMORPHISM*, WHICH LITERALLY MEANS "MANY FORMS."

## Understanding *protected* access

The *public* and *private* access keywords create two extremes of accessibility: Public fields and methods of a class are accessible to everyone, whereas private fields and methods of a class are accessible to only the class itself.

These two extremes are sufficient when considering classes in isolation. However, as all experienced object-oriented programmers know, isolated classes cannot solve complex problems. Inheritance is a powerful way of connecting classes, and there is clearly a special and close relationship between a derived class and its base class. Frequently, it is useful for a base class to allow derived classes to access some of its members while hiding these same members from classes that are not part of the inheritance hierarchy. In this situation, you can mark members with the *protected* keyword. It works like this:

- If a class A is derived from another class B, it can access the protected class members of class B. In other words, inside the derived class A, a protected member of class B is effectively public.
- If a class A is not derived from another class B, it cannot access any protected members of class B. So, within class A, a protected member of class B is effectively private.

C# gives programmers complete freedom to declare methods and fields as protected. However, most object-oriented programming guidelines recommend keeping your fields strictly private whenever possible, and only relax these restrictions when absolutely necessary. Public fields violate encapsulation because all users of the class have direct, unrestricted access to the fields. Protected fields maintain encapsulation for users of a class, for whom the protected fields are inaccessible. However, protected fields still allow encapsulation to be violated by other classes that inherit from the base class.

#### NOTE

You can access a protected base class member not only in a derived class but also in classes derived from the derived class. A protected base class member retains its protected accessibility in a derived class and is accessible to further derived classes.

In the following exercise, you will define a simple class hierarchy for modeling different types of vehicles. You will define a base class named *Vehicle* and derived classes named *Airplane* and *Car*. You will define common methods named *StartEngine* and *StopEngine* in the *Vehicle* class, and you will add some methods to both of the derived classes that are specific to those classes. Finally, you will add a virtual method named *Drive* to the *Vehicle* class and override the default implementation of this method in both of the derived classes.

Create a hierarchy of classes

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Vehicles project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 12\Windows X\Vehicles folder in your Documents folder.

The Vehicles project contains the file Program.cs, which defines the *Program* class with the *Main* and *doWork* methods that you have seen in previous exercises.

3. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Vehicles project, point to Add, and then click Class.

The Add New Item—Vehicles dialog box opens.

4. In the Add New Item—Vehicles dialog box, verify that the Class template is highlighted. In the middle pane, in the Name box, type **Vehicle.cs** and then click Add.

The file Vehicle.cs is created and added to the project and appears in the Code and Text Editor window. The file contains the definition of an empty class named *Vehicle*.

5. Add the *StartEngine* and *StopEngine* methods to the *Vehicle* class, as

shown next in bold:

```
class Vehicle
{
    public void StartEngine(string noiseToMakeWhenStarting)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Starting engine: {0}", noiseToMakeWhenStarting);
    }
    public void StopEngine(string noiseToMakeWhenStopping)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Stopping engine: {0}", noiseToMakeWhenStopping);
    }
}
```

All classes that derive from the *Vehicle* class will inherit these methods. The values for the *noiseToMakeWhenStarting* and *noiseToMakeWhenStopping* parameters will be different for each different type of vehicle and will help you to identify which vehicle is being started and stopped later.

6. On the Project menu, click Add Class.

The Add New Item—Vehicles dialog box opens again.

7. In the Name box, type **Airplane.cs**, and then click Add.

A new file containing a class named *Airplane* is added to the project and appears in the Code and Text Editor window.

8. In the Code and Text Editor window, modify the definition of the *Airplane* class so that it inherits from the *Vehicle* class, as shown in bold here:

```
class Airplane : Vehicle
{
}
```

9. Add the *TakeOff* and *Land* methods to the *Airplane* class, as shown in bold in the following:

```
class Airplane : Vehicle
{
    public void TakeOff()
```

```

    {
        Console.WriteLine("Taking off");
    }
    public void Land()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Landing");
    }
}

```

10. On the Project menu, click Add Class.

The Add New Item—Vehicles dialog box opens again.

11. In the Name text box, type **Car.cs**, and then click Add.

A new file containing a class named *Car* is added to the project and appears in the Code and Text Editor window.

12. In the Code and Text Editor window, modify the definition of the *Car* class so that it derives from the *Vehicle* class, as shown here in bold:

```

class Car : Vehicle
{
}

```

13. Add the *Accelerate* and *Brake* methods to the *Car* class, as shown in bold in the following:

```

class Car : Vehicle
{
    public void Accelerate()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Accelerating");
    }

    public void Brake()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Braking");
    }
}

```

14. Display the Vehicle.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

15. Add the virtual *Drive* method to the *Vehicle* class, as presented here in bold:

```
class Vehicle
{
    ...
    public virtual void Drive()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Default implementation of the Drive method");
    }
}
```

16. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
17. In the *doWork* method, delete the *// TODO:* comment and add code to create an instance of the *Airplane* class and test its methods by simulating a quick journey by airplane, as follows:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Console.WriteLine("Journey by airplane:");
    Airplane myPlane = new Airplane();
    myPlane.StartEngine("Contact");
    myPlane.TakeOff();
    myPlane.Drive();
    myPlane.Land();
    myPlane.StopEngine("Whirr");
}
```

18. Add the statements that follow (shown in bold) to the *doWork* method after the code you have just written. These statements create an instance of the *Car* class and test its methods.

```
static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Console.WriteLine("\nJourney by car:");
    Car myCar = new Car();
    myCar.StartEngine("Brm brm");
    myCar.Accelerate();
    myCar.Drive();
    myCar.Brake();
}
```

```

        myCar.StopEngine("Phut phut");
    }

```

19. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

In the console window, verify that the program outputs messages simulating the different stages of performing a journey by airplane and by car, as shown in the following image:

```

C:\Windows\system32
Journey by airplane:
Starting engine: Contact
Taking off
Default implementation of the Drive method
Landing
Stopping engine: Whirr

Journey by car:
Starting engine: Brm brm
Accelerating
Default implementation of the Drive method
Braking
Stopping engine: Phut phut
Press any key to continue . . . _

```

Notice that both modes of transport invoke the default implementation of the virtual *Drive* method because neither class currently overrides this method.

- Press Enter to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.
- Display the *Airplane* class in the Code and Text Editor window. Override the *Drive* method in the *Airplane* class, as follows in bold:

```

class Airplane : Vehicle
{
    ...
    public override void Drive()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Flying");
    }
}

```

#### NOTE

IntelliSense displays a list of available virtual methods. If you select the *Drive* method from the IntelliSense list, Visual Studio automatically inserts into your code a statement that calls the *base.Drive* method. If this happens, delete the statement, because this exercise does not require it.

- Display the *Car* class in the Code and Text Editor window. Override the *Drive* method in the *Car* class, as shown in bold in the following:

```
class Car : Vehicle
{
    ...
    public override void Drive()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Motoring");
    }
}
```

- On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

In the console window, notice that the *Airplane* object now displays the message *Flying* when the application calls the *Drive* method, and the *Car* object displays the message *Motoring*:

```
C:\Windows\system32
Journey by airplane:
Starting engine: Contact
Taking off
Flying ←
Landing
Stopping engine: Whirr

Journey by car:
Starting engine: Brm brm
Accelerating
Motoring ←
Braking
Stopping engine: Phut phut
Press any key to continue . . . _
```

- Press Enter to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.
- Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
- Add the statements shown here in bold to the end of the *doWork* method:

```
static void doWork()
{
    ...
    ...
}
```

```

        Console.WriteLine("\nTesting polymorphism");
        Vehicle v = myCar;
        v.Drive();
        v = myPlane;
        v.Drive();
    }

```

This code tests the polymorphism provided by the virtual *Drive* method. The code creates a reference to the *Car* object using a *Vehicle* variable (which is safe, because all *Car* objects are *Vehicle* objects) and then calls the *Drive* method by using this *Vehicle* variable. The final two statements refer the *Vehicle* variable to the *Airplane* object and call what seems to be the same *Drive* method again.

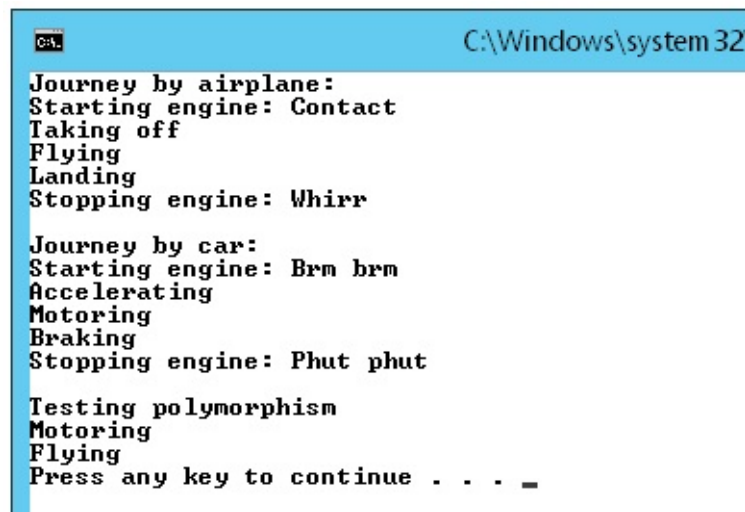
- On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

In the console window, verify that the same messages appear as before, followed by this text:

```

Testing polymorphism
Motoring
Flying

```



```

C:\Windows\system32
Journey by airplane:
Starting engine: Contact
Taking off
Flying
Landing
Stopping engine: Whirr

Journey by car:
Starting engine: Brm brm
Accelerating
Motoring
Braking
Stopping engine: Phut phut

Testing polymorphism
Motoring
Flying
Press any key to continue . . . _

```

The *Drive* method is virtual, so the runtime (not the compiler) works out which version of the *Drive* method to call when invoking it through a *Vehicle* variable based on the real type of the object referenced by this variable. In the first case, the *Vehicle* object refers to a *Car*, so the application calls the *Car.Drive* method. In the second case, the *Vehicle* object refers to an *Airplane*, so the application calls the *Airplane.Drive* method.



- Press Enter to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Understanding extension methods

Inheritance is a powerful feature that makes it possible for you to extend the functionality of a class by creating a new class that derives from it. However, sometimes using inheritance is not the most appropriate mechanism for adding new behaviors, especially if you need to quickly extend a type without affecting existing code.

For example, suppose you want to add a new feature to the *int* type, such as a method named *Negate* that returns the negative equivalent value that an integer currently contains. (I know that you could simply use the unary minus operator `[-]` to perform the same task, but bear with me.) One way to achieve this is to define a new type named *NegInt32* that inherits from *System.Int32* (*int* is an alias for *System.Int32*) and that adds the *Negate* method:

```
class NegInt32 : System.Int32 // don't try this!
{
    public int Negate()
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

The theory is that *NegInt32* will inherit all the functionality associated with the *System.Int32* type in addition to the *Negate* method. There are two reasons why you might not want to follow this approach:

- This method applies only to the *NegInt32* type, and if you want to use it with existing *int* variables in your code, you have to change the definition of every *int* variable to the *NegInt32* type.
- The *System.Int32* type is actually a structure, not a class, and you cannot use inheritance with structures.

This is where extension methods become very useful.

Using an extension method, you can extend an existing type (a class or a structure) with additional static methods. These static methods become

immediately available to your code in any statements that reference data of the type being extended.

You define an extension method in a *static* class and specify the type to which the method applies as the first parameter to the method, along with the *this* keyword. Here's an example showing how you can implement the *Negate* extension method for the *int* type:

```
static class Util
{
    public static int Negate(this int i)
    {
        return -i;
    }
}
```

The syntax looks a little odd, but it is the *this* keyword prefixing the parameter to *Negate* that identifies it as an extension method, and the fact that the parameter that *this* prefixes is an *int* means that you are extending the *int* type.

To use the extension method, bring the *Util* class into scope. (If necessary, add a *using* statement specifying the namespace to which the *Util* class belongs.) Then, you can simply use dot notation (.) to reference the method, like this:

```
int x = 591;
Console.WriteLine("x.Negate {0}", x.Negate());
```

Notice that you do not need to reference the *Util* class anywhere in the statement that calls the *Negate* method. The C# compiler automatically detects all extension methods for a given type from all the static classes that are in scope. You can also invoke the *Util.Negate* method passing an *int* as the parameter, using the regular syntax you have seen before, although this use obviates the purpose of defining the method as an extension method:

```
int x = 591;
Console.WriteLine("x.Negate {0}", Util.Negate(x));
```

In the following exercise, you will add an extension method to the *int* type. With this extension method, you can convert the value in an *int* variable from base 10

to a representation of that value in a different number base.

Create an extension method

1. In Visual Studio 2013, open the ExtensionMethod project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 12\Windows X\ExtensionMethod folder in your Documents folder.

2. Display the Util.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file contains a static class named *Util* in a namespace named *Extensions*. Remember that you must define extension methods inside a static class. The class is empty apart from the *// TODO:* comment.

3. Delete the comment and declare a public static method in the *Util* class, named *ConvertToBase*. The method should take two parameters: an *int* parameter named *i*, prefixed with the *this* keyword to indicate that the method is an extension method for the *int* type, and another ordinary *int* parameter named *baseToConvertTo*.

The method will convert the value in *i* to the base indicated by *baseToConvertTo*. The method should return an *int* containing the converted value.

The *ConvertToBase* method should look like this:

```
static class Util
{
    public static int ConvertToBase(this int i, int baseToConvertTo)
    {
    }
}
```

4. Add an *if* statement to the *ConvertToBase* method that checks that the value of the *baseToConvertTo* parameter is between 2 and 10.

The algorithm used by this exercise does not work reliably outside this range of values. Throw an *ArgumentException* exception with a suitable message if the value of *baseToConvertTo* is outside this range.

The *ConvertToBase* method should look like this:

```
public static int ConvertToBase(this int i, int baseToConvertTo)
```

```

{
    if (baseToConvertTo < 2 || baseToConvertTo > 10)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException("Value cannot be converted to base " +
                                     baseToConvertTo.ToString());
    }
}

```

5. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *ConvertToBase* method, after the statement that throws the *ArgumentException* exception.

This code implements a well-known algorithm that converts a number from base 10 to a different number base. ([Chapter 5](#) presents a version of this algorithm for converting a decimal number to octal)

```

public static int ConvertToBase(this int i, int baseToConvertTo)
{
    ...
    int result = 0;
    int iterations = 0;
    do
    {
        int nextDigit = i % baseToConvertTo;
        i /= baseToConvertTo;
        result += nextDigit * (int)Math.Pow(10, iterations);
        iterations++;
    }
    while (i != 0);

    return result;
}

```

6. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
7. Add the following *using* directive after the *using System;* directive at the top of the file:

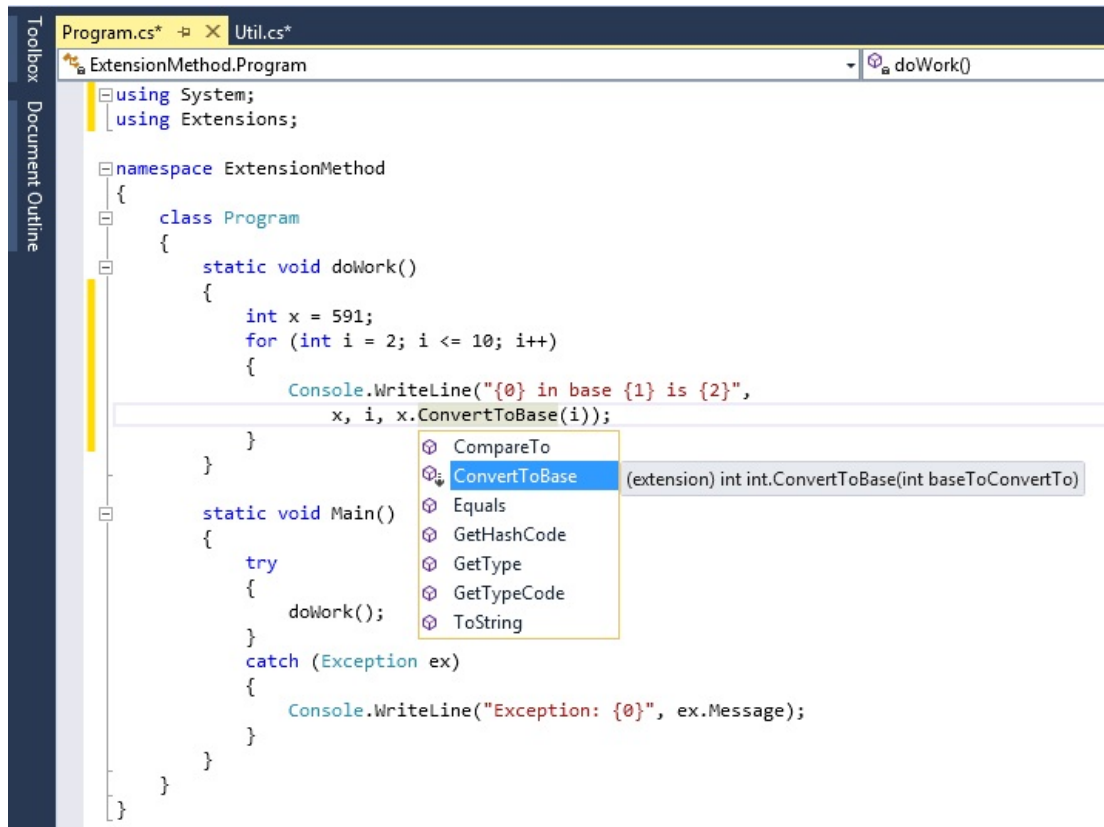
```
using Extensions;
```

This statement brings the namespace containing the *Util* class into scope. The *ConvertToBase* extension method will not be visible in the Program.cs file if you do not perform this task.

8. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *doWork* method of the *Program* class, replacing the *// TODO:* comment:

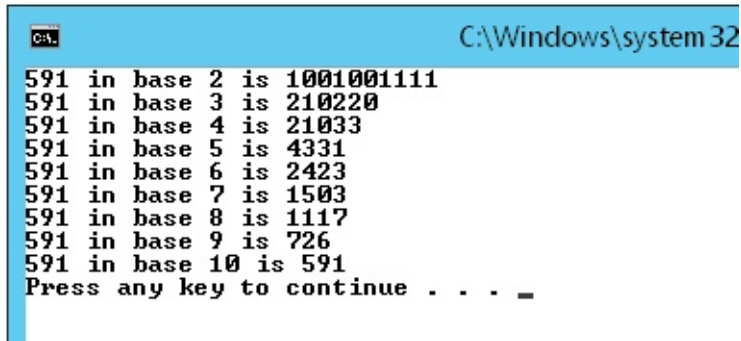
```
static void doWork()
{
    int x = 591;
    for (int i = 2; i <= 10; i++)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("{0} in base {1} is {2}",
            x, i, x.ConvertToBase(i));
    }
}
```

This code creates an *int* named *x* and sets it to the value *591*. (You can pick any integer value you want.) The code then uses a loop to print out the value *591* in all number bases between 2 and 10. Notice that *ConvertToBase* appears as an extension method in IntelliSense when you type the period (.) after *x* in the *Console.WriteLine* statement.



9. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Confirm that the

program displays messages showing the value 591 in the different number bases to the console, like this:



```
C:\Windows\system32
591 in base 2 is 1001001111
591 in base 3 is 210220
591 in base 4 is 21033
591 in base 5 is 4331
591 in base 6 is 2423
591 in base 7 is 1503
591 in base 8 is 1117
591 in base 9 is 726
591 in base 10 is 591
Press any key to continue . . . _
```

- Press Enter to close the program and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to use inheritance to define a hierarchy of classes, and you should now understand how to override inherited methods and implement virtual methods. You also learned how to add an extension method to an existing type.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 13](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Create a derived class from a base class	Declare the new class name followed by a colon and the name of the base class. For example:  <pre>class DerivedClass : BaseClass {     ... }</pre>

Call a base-class constructor as part of the constructor for an inheriting class	<p>Suffix the definition of the constructor with a call to base, before the body of the derived-class constructor, and provide any necessary parameters to the base constructor. For example:</p> <pre> class DerivedClass : BaseClass {     ...     public DerivedClass(int x) : base(x)     {         ...     }     ... } </pre>
Declare a virtual method	<p>Use the virtual keyword when declaring the method. For example:</p> <pre> class Mammal {     public virtual void Breathe()     {         ...     }     ... } </pre>
Implement a method in a derived class that overrides an inherited virtual method	<p>Use the override keyword when declaring the method in the derived class. For example:</p> <pre> class Whale : Mammal {     public override void Breathe()     {         ...     }     ... } </pre>
Define an extension method for a type	<p>Add a static public method to a static class. The first parameter must be of the type being extended, preceded by the this keyword. For example:</p> <pre> static class Util { </pre>

```
`  
    public static int Negate(this int i)  
    {  
        return -i;  
    }  
}
```



# Chapter 13. Creating interfaces and defining abstract classes

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Defining an interface
- Implementing an interface
- Referencing a class through its interface
- Abstract classes
- Sealed classes

Inheriting from a class is a powerful mechanism, but the real power of inheritance comes from inheriting from an interface. An interface does not contain any code or data; it just specifies the methods and properties that a class that inherits from the interface must provide. Using an interface makes it possible for you to completely separate the names and signatures of the methods of a class from the method's implementation.

Abstract classes are similar in many ways to interfaces except that they can contain code and data. However, you can specify that certain methods of an abstract class are virtual so that a class that inherits from the abstract class must provide its own implementation of these methods. You frequently use abstract classes with interfaces, and together they provide a key technique with which you can build extensible programming frameworks, as you will discover in this chapter.

## Understanding interfaces

Suppose that you want to define a new class in which you can store collections

of objects, a bit like an array. However, unlike using an array, you want to provide a method named *RetrieveInOrder* to enable applications to retrieve objects in a sequence that depends on the type of object the collection contains (with an ordinary array, you can iterate through its contents, and by default you retrieve items according to their index). For example, if the collection holds alphanumeric objects such as strings, the collection should enable an application to retrieve these strings in sequence according to the collating sequence of the computer, and if the collection holds numeric objects such as integers, the collection should enable the application to retrieve objects in numerical order.

When you define the collection class, you do not want to restrict the types of objects that it can hold (the objects can even be class or structure types), and consequently you don't know how to order these objects. The question therefore is how do you provide a method in the collection class that sorts objects whose types you do not know when you actually write the collection class? At first glance, this problem seems similar to the *ToString* problem described in [Chapter 12](#) which could be resolved by declaring a virtual method which subclasses of your collection class can override. However, this is not the case. There is no inheritance relationship between the collection class and the objects that it holds, so a virtual method would not be of much use. If you think for a moment, the problem is that the way in which the objects in the collection should be ordered is dependent on the type of the object in the collection, and not on the collection itself. The solution, therefore, is to require that all the objects provide a method, such as the *CompareTo* method shown in the following example that the *RetrieveInOrder* method of the collection can call, making it possible for the collection to compare these objects with one another:

```
int CompareTo(object obj)
{
    // return 0 if this instance is equal to obj
    // return < 0 if this instance is less than obj
    // return > 0 if this instance is greater than obj
    ...
}
```

You can define an interface for collectable objects that includes the *CompareTo* method and specify that the collection class can contain only classes that implement this interface. In this way, an interface is similar to a contract. If a

class implements an interface, the interface guarantees that the class contains all the methods specified in the interface. This mechanism ensures that you will be able to call the *CompareTo* method on all objects in the collection and sort them.

Using interfaces, you can truly separate the “what” from the “how.” The interface gives you only the name, return type, and parameters of the method. Exactly how the method is implemented is not a concern of the interface. The interface describes the functionality that a class should provide but not how this functionality is implemented.

## Defining an interface

Defining an interface is syntactically similar to defining a class, except that you use the *interface* keyword instead of the *class* keyword. Within the interface, you declare methods exactly as in a class or a structure, except that you never specify an access modifier (*public*, *private*, or *protected*). Additionally, the methods in an interface have no implementation; they are simply declarations, and all types that implement the interface must provide their own implementations.

Consequently, you replace the method body with a semicolon. Here is an example:

```
interface IComparable
{
    int CompareTo(object obj);
}
```

### TIP

The Microsoft .NET Framework documentation recommends that you preface the name of your interfaces with the capital letter *I*. This convention is the last vestige of Hungarian notation in C#. Incidentally, the *System* namespace already defines the *IComparable* interface as just shown.

An interface cannot contain any data; you cannot add fields (not even private ones) to an interface.

## Implementing an interface

To implement an interface, you declare a class or structure that inherits from the interface and that implements *all* the methods specified by the interface. This is not really inheritance as such; although the syntax is the same and some of the semantics that you will see later in this chapter bear many of the hallmarks of inheritance. You should note that unlike class inheritance, a struct can implement an interface.

For example, suppose that you are defining the *Mammal* hierarchy described in [Chapter 12](#), but you need to specify that land-bound mammals provide a method named *NumberOfLegs* that returns as an *int* the number of legs that a mammal has. (Sea-bound mammals do not implement this interface.) You could define the *ILandBound* interface that contains this method, as follows:

```
interface ILandBound
{
    int NumberOfLegs();
}
```

You could then implement this interface in the *Horse* class. You inherit from the interface and provide an implementation of every method defined by the interface (in this case, there is just the one method: *NumberOfLegs*).

```
class Horse : ILandBound
{
    ...
    public int NumberOfLegs()
    {
        return 4;
    }
}
```

When you implement an interface, you must ensure that each method matches its corresponding interface method exactly, according to the following rules:

- The method names and return types match exactly.
- Any parameters (including *ref* and *out* keyword modifiers) match exactly.
- All methods implementing an interface must be publicly accessible.  
However, if you are using an explicit interface implementation, the method

should not have an access qualifier.

If there is any difference between the interface definition and its declared implementation, the class will not compile.

#### TIP

The Microsoft Visual Studio integrated development environment (IDE) can help reduce coding errors caused by failing to implement the methods in an interface. The Implement Interface Wizard can generate stubs for each item in an interface that a class implements. You then fill in these stubs with the appropriate code. You will see how to use this wizard in the exercises later in this chapter.

A class can inherit from another class and implement an interface at the same time. In this case, C# does not distinguish between the base class and the interface by using specific keywords as, for example, Java does. Instead, C# uses a positional notation. The base class is always named first, followed by a comma, followed by the interface. The following example defines *Horse* as a class that is a *Mammal* but that additionally implements the *ILandBound* interface:

```
interface ILandBound
{
    ...
}
class Mammal
{
    ...
}
class Horse : Mammal , ILandBound
{
    ...
}
```

#### NOTE

An interface, *InterfaceA*, can inherit from another interface, *InterfaceB*. Technically, this is known as *interface extension* rather than inheritance. In this case, any class or struct that implements *InterfaceA* must provide implementations of all the methods in *InterfaceB* and *InterfaceA*.

## Referencing a class through its interface

In the same way that you can reference an object by using a variable defined as a class that is higher up the hierarchy, you can reference an object by using a variable defined as an interface that its class implements. Taking the preceding example, you can reference a *Horse* object by using an *ILandBound* variable, as follows:

```
Horse myHorse = new Horse(...);  
ILandBound iMyHorse = myHorse; // legal
```

This works because all horses are land-bound mammals, although the converse is not true—you cannot assign an *ILandBound* object to a *Horse* variable without casting it first to verify that it does actually reference a *Horse* object and not some other class that also happens to implement the *ILandBound* interface.

The technique of referencing an object through an interface is useful because you can use it to define methods that can take different types as parameters, as long as the types implement a specified interface. For example, the *FindLandSpeed* method shown here can take any argument that implements the *ILandBound* interface:

```
int FindLandSpeed(ILandBound landBoundMammal)  
{  
    ...  
}
```

You can verify that an object is an instance of a class that implements a specific interface by using the *is* operator, which is demonstrated in [Chapter 8](#). You use the *is* operator to determine whether an object has a specified type, and it works with interfaces as well as classes and structs. For example, the following block of code checks that the variable *myHorse* actually implements the *ILandBound* interface before attempting to assign it to an *ILandBound* variable:

```
if (myHorse is ILandBound)  
{  
    ILandBound iLandBoundAnimal = myHorse;  
}
```

Note that when referencing an object through an interface you can invoke only

Note that when referencing an object through an interface, you can invoke only methods that are visible through the interface.

## Working with multiple interfaces

A class can have at most one base class, but it is allowed to implement an unlimited number of interfaces. A class must implement all the methods declared by these interfaces.

If a structure or class implements more than one interface, you specify the interfaces as a comma-separated list. If a class also has a base class, the interfaces are listed *after* the base class. For example, suppose that you define another interface named *IGrazable* that contains the *ChewGrass* method for all grazing animals. You can define the *Horse* class like this:

```
class Horse : Mammal, ILandBound, IGrazable
{
    ...
}
```

## Explicitly implementing an interface

The examples so far have shown classes that implicitly implement an interface. If you revisit the *ILandBound* interface and the *Horse* class (shown next), although the *Horse* class implements from the *ILandBound* interface, there is nothing in the implementation of the *NumberOfLegs* method in the *Horse* class that says it is part of the *ILandBound* interface:

```
interface ILandBound
{
    int NumberOfLegs();
}
class Horse : ILandBound
{
    ...
    public int NumberOfLegs()
    {
        return 4;
    }
}
```

This might not be an issue in a simple situation, but suppose the *Horse* class

implemented multiple interfaces. There is nothing to prevent multiple interfaces from specifying a method with the same name, although they might have different semantics. For example, suppose that you wanted to implement a transportation system based on horse-drawn coaches. A lengthy journey might be broken down into several stages, or “legs.” If you wanted to keep track of how many legs each horse had pulled the coach for, you might define the following interface:

```
interface IJourney
{
    int NumberOfLegs();
}
```

Now, if you implement this interface in the *Horse* class, you have an interesting problem:

```
class Horse : ILandBound, IJourney
{
    ...
    public int NumberOfLegs()
    {
        return 4;
    }
}
```

This is legal code, but does the horse have four legs, or has it pulled the coach for four legs of the journey? The answer as far as C# is concerned is both of these! By default, C# does not distinguish which interface the method is implementing, so the same method actually implements both interfaces.

To solve this problem and disambiguate which method is part of which interface implementation, you can implement interfaces explicitly. To do this, you specify which interface a method belongs to when you implement it, like this:

```
class Horse : ILandBound, IJourney
{
    ...
    int ILandBound.NumberOfLegs()
    {
        return 4;
    }
}
```



```

    int IJourney.NumberOfLegs()
    {
        return 3;
    }
}

```

Now, you can see that the horse has four legs and has pulled the coach for three legs of the journey.

Apart from prefixing the name of the method with the interface name, there is one other subtle difference in this syntax: The methods are not marked as *public*. You cannot specify the protection for methods that are part of an explicit interface implementation. This leads to another interesting phenomenon. If you create a *Horse* variable in code, you cannot actually invoke either of the *NumberOfLegs* methods, because they are not visible. As far as the *Horse* class is concerned, they are both private. In fact, this makes sense. If the methods were visible through the *Horse* class, which method would the following code actually invoke, the one for the *ILandBound* interface or the one for the *IJourney* interface?

```

Horse horse = new Horse();
...
int legs = horse.NumberOfLegs();

```

So, how do you access these methods? The answer is that you reference the *Horse* object through the appropriate interface, like this:

```

Horse horse = new Horse();
...
IJourney journeyHorse = horse;
int legsInJourney = journeyHorse.NumberOfLegs();
ILandBound landBoundHorse = horse;
int legsOnHorse = landBoundHorse.NumberOfLegs();

```

I recommend explicitly implementing interfaces when possible.

## Interface restrictions

The essential idea to remember is that an interface never contains any implementation. The following restrictions are natural consequences of this:

- You're not allowed to define any fields in an interface, not even static fields. A field is an implementation detail of a class or structure.
- You're not allowed to define any constructors in an interface. A constructor is also considered to be an implementation detail of a class or structure.
- You're not allowed to define a destructor in an interface. A destructor contains the statements used to destroy an object instance. (Destructors are described in [Chapter 14](#).)
- You cannot specify an access modifier for any method. All methods in an interface are implicitly public.
- You cannot nest any types (such as enumerations, structures, classes, or interfaces) inside an interface.
- An interface is not allowed to inherit from a structure or a class, although an interface can inherit from another interface. Structures and classes contain implementation; if an interface were allowed to inherit from either, it would be inheriting some implementation.

## Defining and using interfaces

In the following exercises, you will define and implement interfaces that constitute part of a simple graphical drawing package. You will define two interfaces called *IDraw* and *IColor*, and then you will define classes that implement them. Each class will define a shape that can be drawn on a canvas on a form. (A *canvas* is a control that you can use to draw lines, text, and shapes on the screen.)

The *IDraw* interface defines the following methods:

- *SetLocation* With this method, you can specify the position as x and y-coordinates of the shape on the canvas.
- *Draw* This method actually draws the shape on the canvas at the location specified by using the *SetLocation* method.

The *IColor* interface defines the following method:

- *SetColor* You use this method to specify the color of the shape. When the shape is drawn on the canvas, it will appear in this color.

Define the *IDraw* and *IColor* interfaces

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Drawing project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 13\Windows X\Drawing folder in your Documents folder.

The Drawing project is a graphical application. It contains a form called *DrawingPad*. This form contains a canvas control called *drawingCanvas*. You will use this form and canvas to test your code.

3. In Solution Explorer, click the Drawing project. On the Project menu, click Add New Item.

The Add New Item – Drawing dialog box opens.

4. In the left pane of the Add New Item – Drawing dialog box, click Visual C#, and then click Code. In the middle pane, click the Interface template. In the Name box, type **IDraw.cs**, and then click Add.

Visual Studio creates the IDraw.cs file and adds it to your project. The IDraw.cs file appears in the Code and Text Editor window, and should look like this:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.Linq;
using System.Text;
using System.Threading.Tasks;
namespace Drawing
{
    interface IDraw
    {
    }
}
```

5. In the IDraw.cs file, if you are using Windows 8.1, add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls;
```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, add this *using* directive, instead:

```
using System.Windows.Controls;
```

You will reference the *Canvas* class in this interface. The *Canvas* class is located in the *Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls* namespace for Windows Store apps and in the *System.Windows.Controls* namespace for Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF) applications.

6. Add the methods shown here in bold to the *IDraw* interface:

```
interface IDraw
{
    void SetLocation(int xCoord, int yCoord);
    void Draw(Canvas canvas);
}
```

7. On the Project menu, click Add New Item again.
8. In the Add New Item – Drawing dialog box, in the middle pane, click the Interface template. In the Name box, type **IColor.cs**, and then click Add. Visual Studio creates the IColor.cs file and adds it to your project. The IColor.cs file appears in the Code and Text Editor window.
9. In the IColor.cs file, if you are using Windows 8.1, at the top of the file, add the following *using* directive to the list:

```
using Windows.UI;
```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, add this *using* directive:

```
using System.Windows.Media;
```

You will reference the *Color* class in this interface, which is located in the *Windows.UI* namespace for Windows Store apps and in the

*System.Windows.Media* namespace for WPF applications.

10. Add the following method shown in bold to the *IColor* interface definition:

```
interface IColor
{
    void SetColor(Color color);
}
```

You have now defined the *IDraw* and *IColor* interfaces. The next step is to create some classes that implement them. In the following exercise, you will create two new shape classes called *Square* and *Circle*. These classes will implement both interfaces.

Create the *Square* and *Circle* classes, and implement the interfaces

1. On the Project menu, click Add Class.
2. In the Add New Item – Drawing dialog box, in the middle pane, verify that the Class template is selected. In the Name box, type **Square.cs**, and then click Add.

Visual Studio creates the Square.cs file and displays it in the Code and Text Editor window.

3. If you are using Windows 8.1, at the top of the Square.cs file, add the following *using* directives to the list:

```
using Windows.UI;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Media;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Shapes;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls;
```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, at the top of the Square.cs file, add these *using* directives:

```
using System.Windows.Media;  
using System.Windows.Shapes;  
using System.Windows.Controls;
```

4. Modify the definition of the *Square* class so that it implements the *IDraw*

and *IColor* interfaces, as shown here in bold:

```
class Square : IDraw, IColor
{
}
```

5. Add the following private variables shown in bold to the *Square* class:

```
class Square : IDraw, IColor
{
    private int sideLength;
    private int locX = 0, locY = 0;
    private Rectangle rect = null;
}
```

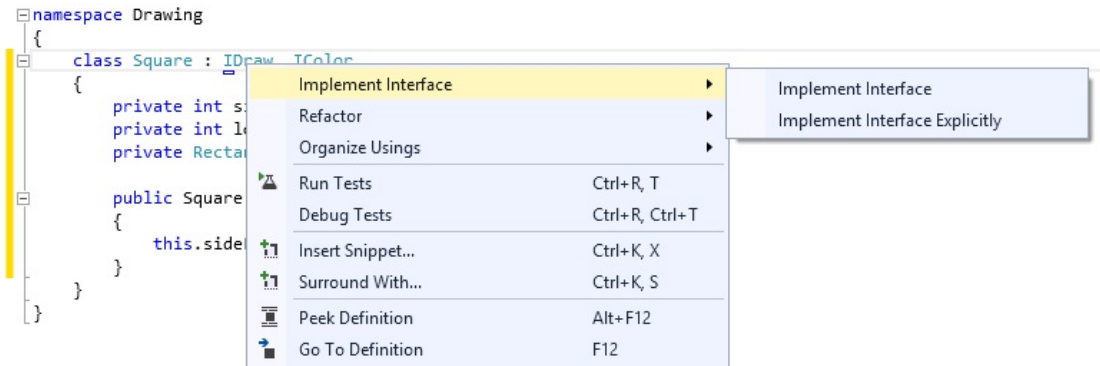
These variables will hold the position and size of the *Square* object on the canvas. The *Rectangle* class is located in the *Windows.UI.Xaml.Shapes* namespace for Windows Store apps and in the *System.Windows.Shapes* namespace for WPF applications. You will use this class to draw the square:

6. Add the following constructor shown in bold to the *Square* class:

```
class Square : IDraw, IColor
{
    ...
    public Square(int sideLength)
    {
        this.sideLength = sideLength;
    }
}
```

This constructor initializes the *sideLength* field and specifies the length of each side of the square.

7. In the definition of the *Square* class, right-click the *IDraw* interface. In the shortcut menu that appears, point to Implement Interface, and then click Implement Interface Explicitly, as shown in the following image:



This feature causes Visual Studio to generate default implementations of the methods in the *IDraw* interface. You can also add the methods to the *Square* class manually if you prefer. The following example shows the code generated by Visual Studio:

```
void IDraw.SetLocation(int xCoord, int yCoord)
{
    throw new NotImplementedException();
}
void IDraw.Draw(Canvas canvas)
{
    throw new NotImplementedException();
}
```

Each of these methods currently throws a *NotImplementedException* exception. You are expected to replace the body of these methods with your own code.

8. In the *IDraw.SetLocation* method, replace the existing code that throws a *NotImplementedException* exception with the following statements shown in bold:

```
void IDraw.SetLocation(int xCoord, int yCoord)
{
    this.locX = xCoord;
    this.locY = yCoord;
}
```

This code stores the values passed in through the parameters in the *locX* and *locY* fields in the *Square* object.

9. Replace the code generated in the *IDraw.Draw* method with the statements shown here in bold:

```
void IDraw.Draw(Canvas canvas)
{
    if (this.rect != null)
    {
        canvas.Children.Remove(this.rect);
    }
    else
    {
        this.rect = new Rectangle();
    }
    this.rect.Height = this.sideLength;
    this.rect.Width = this.sideLength;
    Canvas.SetTop(this.rect, this.locY);
    Canvas.SetLeft(this.rect, this.locX);
    canvas.Children.Add(this.rect);
}
```

This method renders the *Square* object by drawing a *Rectangle* shape on the canvas. (A square is simply a rectangle where all four sides have the same length.) If the *Rectangle* has been drawn previously (possibly at a different location and with a different color), it is removed from the canvas. The height and width of the *Rectangle* are set by using the value of the *sideLength* field. The position of the *Rectangle* on the canvas is set by using the static *SetTop* and *SetLeft* methods of the *Canvas* class, and then the *Rectangle* is added to the canvas. (This causes it to display.)

10. Add the *SetColor* method from the *IColor* interface to the *Square* class, as shown here:

```
void IColor.SetColor(Color color)
{
    if (this.rect != null)
    {
        SolidColorBrush brush = new SolidColorBrush(color);
        this.rect.Fill = brush;
    }
}
```



This method checks that the *Square* object has actually been displayed. (The *rect* field will be *null* if it has not yet been rendered.) The code sets the *Fill* property of the *rect* field with the specified color by using a *SolidColorBrush* object. (The details of how the *SolidColorBrush* class works are beyond the scope of this discussion.)

11. On the Project menu, click Add Class. In the Add New Item – Drawing dialog box, in the Name box, type **Circle.cs**, and then click Add.

Visual Studio creates the Circle.cs file and displays it in the Code and Text Editor window.

12. If you are using Windows 8.1, at the top of the Circle.cs file, add the following *using* directives to the list:

```
using Windows.UI;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Media;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Shapes;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls;
```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, at the top of the Circle.cs file, add these *using* directives:

```
using System.Windows.Media;  
using System.Windows.Shapes;  
using System.Windows.Controls;
```

13. Modify the definition of the *Circle* class so that it implements the *IDraw* and *IColor* interfaces as shown here in bold:

```
class Circle : IDraw, IColor  
{  
}
```

14. Add the following private variables shown in bold to the *Circle* class:

```
class Circle : IDraw, IColor  
{  
    private int diameter;  
    private int locX = 0, locY = 0;
```

```
    private Ellipse circle = null;
}
```

These variables will hold the position and size of the *Circle* object on the canvas. The *Ellipse* class provides the functionality that you will use to draw the circle.

15. Add the constructor shown here in bold to the *Circle* class:

```
class Circle : IDraw, IColor
{
    ...
    public Circle(int diameter)
    {
        this.diameter = diameter;
    }
}
```

This constructor initializes the *diameter* field.

16. Add the following *SetLocation* method to the *Circle* class:

```
void IDraw.SetLocation(int xCoord, int yCoord)
{
    this.locX = xCoord;
    this.locY = yCoord;
}
```

This method implements part of the *IDraw* interface, and the code is exactly the same as that in the *Square* class.

17. Add the *Draw* method shown here to the *Circle* class:

```
void IDraw.Draw(Canvas canvas)
{
    if (this.circle != null)
    {
        canvas.Children.Remove(this.circle);
    }
    else
    {
        this.circle = new Ellipse();
    }
}
```

```

    }
    this.circle.Height = this.diameter;
    this.circle.Width = this.diameter;
    Canvas.SetTop(this.circle, this.locY);
    Canvas.SetLeft(this.circle, this.locX);
    canvas.Children.Add(this.circle);
}

```

This method is also part of the *IDraw* interface. It is similar to the *Draw* method in the *Square* class, except that it renders the *Circle* object by drawing an *Ellipse* shape on the canvas. (A circle is an ellipse where the width and height are the same.)

18. Add the following *SetColor* method to the *Circle* class:

```

void IColor.SetColor(Color color)
{
    if (this.circle != null)
    {
        SolidColorBrush brush = new SolidColorBrush(color);
        this.circle.Fill = brush;
    }
}

```

This method is part of the *IColor* interface. As before, this method is similar to that of the *Square* class.

You have completed the *Square* and *Circle* classes. You can now use the form to test them.

Test the *Square* and *Circle* classes

1. Display the *DrawingPad.xaml* file in the Design View window.

2. In the middle of the form, click the shaded area.

The shaded area of the form is the *Canvas* object, and this action sets the focus to this object.

3. In Properties window, click the Event Handlers button. (This button has an icon that looks like a bolt of lightning.)

4. If you are using Windows 8.1, in the list of events, locate the *Tapped*

event, and then double-click it. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, locate the *MouseLeftButtonDown* event, and then double-click it.

Visual Studio creates a method called *drawingCanvas\_Tapped* (Windows Store apps) or *drawingCanvas\_MouseLeftButtonDown* (WPF) for the *DrawingPad* class and displays it in the Code and Text Editor window. This is an event handler that runs when the user taps the canvas with a finger (Windows Store apps) or clicks the left mouse button over the canvas (WPF). You can learn more about event handlers in [Chapter 20](#).

#### NOTE

If you are using a mouse with Windows 8.1, you can also click the left mouse button, which raises the same event as the tap gesture.

5. If you are using Windows 8.1, at the top of the *DrawingPad.xaml.cs* file, add the following *using* directive to the list:

```
using Windows.UI;
```

The *Windows.UI* namespace contains the definition of the *Colors* enumeration which you will use when you set the color of a shape as it is drawn. In WPF, this enumeration is defined in the *System.Windows.Media* namespace, which is already referenced by the *DrawingPad.xaml* file.

6. Add the following code shown in bold to the *drawingCanvas\_Tapped* or *drawingCanvas\_MouseLeftButtonDown* method:

```
private void drawingCanvas_Tapped(object sender, TappedRoutedEventArgs e)
// If you are using WPF, the method is declared as:
// private void drawingCanvas_MouseLeftButtonDown(object sender,
MouseButtonEventArgs e)
{
    Point mouseLocation = e.GetPosition(this.drawingCanvas);
    Square mySquare = new Square(100);
    if (mySquare is IDraw)
    {
        IDraw drawSquare = mySquare;
        drawSquare.SetLocation((int)mouseLocation.X, (int)mouseLocation.Y);
    }
}
```

```

        drawSquare.Draw(drawingCanvas);
    }
}

```

The *TappedRoutedEventArgs* parameter (Windows Store apps) or *MouseButtonEventArgs* parameter (WPF) to this method provides useful information about the position of the mouse. In particular, the *GetPosition* method returns a *Point* structure that contains the x and y-coordinates of the mouse. The code that you have added creates a new *Square* object. It then checks to verify that this object implements the *IDraw* interface (this is good practice and helps to ensure that your code will not fail at run time if you attempt to reference an object through an interface that it does not implement) and creates a reference to the object by using this interface. Remember that when you explicitly implement an interface, the methods defined by the interface are available only by creating a reference to that interface. (The *SetLocation* and *Draw* methods are private to the *Square* class and are available only through the *IDraw* interface.) The code then sets the location of the *Square* to the position of the user's finger or mouse. Note that the x and y-coordinates in the *Point* structure are actually *double* values, so this code casts them to *ints*. The code then calls the *Draw* method to display the *Square* object.

7. At the end of the *drawingCanvas\_Tapped* or *drawingCanvas\_MouseLeftButtonDown* method, add the following code shown in bold:

```

private void drawingCanvas_Tapped(object sender, TappedRoutedEventArgs e)
// If you are using WPF, the method is declared as:
// private void drawingCanvas_MouseLeftButtonDown(object sender,
MouseButtonEventArgs e)
{
    ...
    if (mySquare is IColor)
    {
        IColor colorSquare = mySquare;
        colorSquare.SetColor(Colors.BlueViolet);
    }
}

```

This code tests the *Square* class to verify that it implements the *IColor* interface; if it does, it creates a reference to the *Square* class through this interface and calls the *SetColor* method to set the color of the *Square* object to *Colors.BlueViolet*. (The *Colors* enumeration is provided as part of the .NET Framework.)

#### IMPORTANT

You must call *Draw* before you call *SetColor*. This is because the *SetColor* method sets the color of the *Square* only if it has already been rendered. If you invoke *SetColor* before *Draw*, the color will not be set and the *Square* object will not appear.

8. Return to the *DrawingPad.xaml* file in the Design View window. In the middle of the form, click the *Canvas* object.
9. If you are using Windows 8.1, in the list of events, locate the *RightTapped* event, and then double-click it. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, locate the *MouseRightButtonDown* event, and then double-click it.

These events occur when the user taps, holds, and then releases on the canvas using their finger (Windows Store apps) or the user clicks the right mouse button on the canvas (WPF).

#### NOTE

If you are using Windows 8.1 with a mouse, you can right-click or tap, hold, and release—both gestures raise the *RightTapped* event.

10. Add the following code shown below in bold to the *drawingCanvas\_RightTapped* method (Windows Store apps) or *drawingCanvas\_MouseRightButtonDown* method (WPF):

```
private void drawingCanvas_RightTapped(object sender, HoldingRoutedEventArgs e)
// If you are using WPF, the method is declared as:
// private void drawingCanvas_MouseRightButtonDown(object sender,
// MouseButtonEventArgs e)
```

```

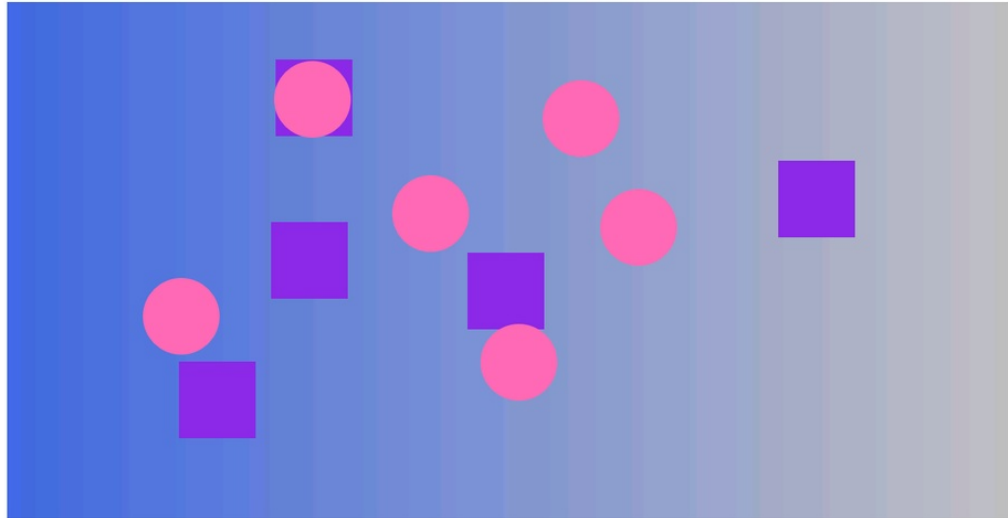
{
    Point mouseLocation = e.GetPosition(this.drawingCanvas);
    Circle myCircle = new Circle(100);
    if (myCircle is IDraw)
    {
        IDraw drawCircle = myCircle;
        drawCircle.SetLocation((int)mouseLocation.X, (int)mouseLocation.Y);
        drawCircle.Draw(drawingCanvas);
    }
    if (myCircle is IColor)
    {
        IColor colorCircle = myCircle;
        colorCircle.SetColor(Colors.HotPink);
    }
}

```

The logic in this code is similar to the method that handles the left mouse button, except that it displays a *Circle* object in *HotPink*. It is also very similar to that of the *drawingCanvas\_Tapped* and *drawingCanvas\_MouseRightButtonDown* methods, except that they draw and fill a circle on the canvas.

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
12. When the Drawing Pad window opens, tap or click anywhere on the canvas displayed in the window. A violet square should appear.
13. Tap, hold, and release, or right-click anywhere on the canvas. A pink circle should appear. You can click the left and right mouse buttons any number of times; each click will draw a square or circle at the mouse position. The following image shows the application running on Windows 8.1. The Windows 7 version of the application is similar:

## Drawing Pad



14. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Abstract classes

You can implement the *ILandBound* and *IGrazable* interfaces discussed before the previous set of exercises in many different classes, depending on how many different types of mammals you want to model in your C# application. In situations such as this, it's quite common for parts of the derived classes to share common implementations. For example, the duplication in the following two classes is obvious:

```
class Horse : Mammal, ILandBound, IGrazable
{
    ...
    void IGrazable.ChewGrass()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Chewing grass");
        // code for chewing grass
    };
}
class Sheep : Mammal, ILandBound, IGrazable
{
    ...
```



```

    void IGrazable.ChewGrass()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Chewing grass");
        // same code as horse for chewing grass
    };
}

```

Duplication in code is a warning sign. If possible, you should refactor the code to avoid this duplication and reduce any associated maintenance costs. One way to achieve this refactoring is to put the common implementation into a new class created specifically for this purpose. In effect, you can insert a new class into the class hierarchy, as shown by the following code example:

```

class GrazingMammal : Mammal, IGrazable
{
    ...
    void IGrazable.ChewGrass()
    {
        // common code for chewing grass
        Console.WriteLine("Chewing grass");
    }
}
class Horse : GrazingMammal, ILandBound
{
    ...
}
class Sheep : GrazingMammal, ILandBound
{
    ...
}

```

This is a good solution, but there is one thing that is still not quite right: you can actually create instances of the *GrazingMammal* class (and the *Mammal* class, for that matter). This doesn't really make sense. The *GrazingMammal* class exists to provide a common default implementation. Its sole purpose is to be a class from which to inherit. The *GrazingMammal* class is an abstraction of common functionality rather than an entity in its own right.

To declare that creating instances of a class is not allowed, you can declare that the class is abstract by using the *abstract* keyword, such as in the following example:

```
abstract class GrazingMammal : Mammal, IGrazable
{
    ...
}
```

If you now try to instantiate a *GrazingMammal* object, the code will not compile:

```
GrazingMammal myGrazingMammal = new GrazingMammal(...); // illegal
```

## Abstract methods

An abstract class can contain abstract methods. An abstract method is similar in principle to a virtual method (which is covered in [Chapter 12](#)), except that it does not contain a method body. A derived class *must* override this method. The following example defines the *DigestGrass* method in the *GrazingMammal* class as an abstract method; grazing mammals might use the same code for chewing grass, but they must provide their own implementation of the *DigestGrass* method. An abstract method is useful if it does not make sense to provide a default implementation in the abstract class but you want to ensure that an inheriting class provides its own implementation of that method.

```
abstract class GrazingMammal : Mammal, IGrazable
{
    abstract void DigestGrass();
    ...
}
```

## Sealed classes

Using inheritance is not always easy and requires forethought. If you create an interface or an abstract class, you are knowingly writing something that will be inherited from in the future. The trouble is that predicting the future is a difficult business. With practice and experience, you can develop the skills to craft a flexible, easy-to-use hierarchy of interfaces, abstract classes, and classes, but it takes effort and you also need a solid understanding of the problem that you are modeling. To put it another way, unless you consciously design a class with the intention of using it as a base class, it's extremely unlikely that it will function

well as a base class. With C#, you can use the *sealed* keyword to prevent a class from being used as a base class if you decide that it should not be. For example:

```
sealed class Horse : GrazingMammal, ILandBound
{
    ...
}
```

If any class attempts to use *Horse* as a base class, a compile-time error will be generated. Note that a sealed class cannot declare any virtual methods and that an abstract class cannot be sealed.

## Sealed methods

You can also use the *sealed* keyword to declare that an individual method in an unsealed class is sealed. This means that a derived class cannot override this method. You can seal only an *override* method, and you declare the method as *sealed override*. You can think of the *interface*, *virtual*, *override*, and *sealed* keywords as follows:

- An interface introduces the name of a method.
- A virtual method is the first implementation of a method.
- An override method is another implementation of a method.
- A sealed method is the last implementation of a method.

## Implementing and using an abstract class

The following exercises use an abstract class to rationalize some of the code that you developed in the previous exercise. The *Square* and *Circle* classes contain a high proportion of duplicate code. It makes sense to factor this code out into an abstract class called *DrawingShape* because this will help to ease maintenance of the *Square* and *Circle* classes in the future.

Create the *DrawingShape* abstract class

1. Return to the Drawing project in Visual Studio.

#### NOTE

A finished working copy of the previous exercise is available in the Drawing project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 13\Windows X\Drawing Using Interfaces folder in your Documents folder.

2. In Solution Explorer, click the Drawing project in the Drawing solution. On the Project menu, click Add Class.

The Add New Item – Drawing dialog box opens.

3. In the Name box, type **DrawingShape.cs**, and then click Add.

Visual Studio creates the class and displays it in the Code and Text Editor window.

4. In the DrawingShape.cs file, if you are using Windows 8.1, at the list at the top of the file, add the following *using* directives:

```
using Windows.UI;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Media;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Shapes;  
using Windows.UI.Xaml.Controls;
```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, add these *using* directives:

```
using System.Windows.Media;  
using System.Windows.Shapes;  
using System.Windows.Controls;
```

The purpose of this class is to contain the code common to the *Circle* and *Square* classes. A program should not be able to instantiate a *DrawingShape* object directly.

5. Modify the definition of the *DrawingShape* class, and declare it as *abstract*, as shown here in bold:

```
abstract class DrawingShape  
{  
}
```

6. Add the following private variables shown in bold to the *DrawingShape* class:

```
abstract class DrawingShape
{
    protected int size;
    protected int locX = 0, locY = 0;
    protected Shape shape = null;
}
```

The *Square* and *Circle* classes both use the *locX* and *locY* fields to specify the location of the object on the canvas, so you can move these fields to the abstract class. Similarly, the *Square* and *Circle* classes both use a field to indicate the size of the object when it was rendered; although it has a different name in each class (*sideLength* and *diameter*), semantically the field performs the same task in both classes. The name *size* is a good abstraction of the purpose of this field.

Internally, the *Square* class uses a *Rectangle* object to render itself on the canvas, and the *Circle* class uses an *Ellipse* object. Both of these classes are part of a hierarchy based on the abstract *Shape* class in the .NET Framework. The *DrawingShape* class uses a *Shape* field to represent both of these types.

7. Add the following constructor to the *DrawingShape* class:

```
abstract class DrawingShape
{
    ...
    public DrawingShape(int size)
    {
        this.size = size;
    }
}
```

This code initializes the *size* field in the *DrawingShape* object.

8. Add the *SetLocation* and *SetColor* methods to the *DrawingShape* class, as shown in bold in the code that follows. These methods provide implementations that are inherited by all classes that derive from the

*DrawingShape* class. Notice that they are not marked as *virtual*, and a derived class is not expected to override them. Also, the *DrawingShape* class is not declared as implementing the *IDraw* or *IColor* interfaces (interface implementation is a feature of the *Square* and *Circle* classes and not this abstract class), so these methods are simply declared as *public*.

```
abstract class DrawingShape
{
    ...
    public void SetLocation(int xCoord, int yCoord)
    {
        this.locX = xCoord;
        this.locY = yCoord;
    }
    public void SetColor(Color color)
    {
        if (this.shape != null)
        {
            SolidColorBrush brush = new SolidColorBrush(color);
            this.shape.Fill = brush;
        }
    }
}
```

9. Add the *Draw* method to the *DrawingShape* class. Unlike the previous methods, this method is declared as *virtual*, and any derived classes are expected to override it to extend the functionality. The code in this method verifies that the *shape* field is not null and then draws it on the canvas. The classes that inherit this method must provide their own code to instantiate the *shape* object. (Remember that the *Square* class creates a *Rectangle* object and the *Circle* class creates an *Ellipse* object.)

```
abstract class DrawingShape
{
    ...
    public virtual void Draw(Canvas canvas)
    {
        if (this.shape == null)
        {
            throw new InvalidOperationException("Shape is null");
        }
        this.shape.Height = this.size;
    }
}
```

```

        this.shape.Width = this.size;
        Canvas.SetTop(this.shape, this.locY);
        Canvas.SetLeft(this.shape, this.locX);
        canvas.Children.Add(this.shape);
    }
}

```

You have now completed the *DrawingShape* abstract class. The next step is to change the *Square* and *Circle* classes so that they inherit from this class, and then remove the duplicated code from the *Square* and *Circle* classes.

Modify the *Square* and *Circle* classes to inherit from the *DrawingShape* class

1. Display the code for the *Square* class in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Modify the definition of the *Square* class so that it inherits from the *DrawingShape* class as well as implementing the *IDraw* and *IColor* interfaces.

```

class Square : DrawingShape, IDraw, IColor
{
    ...
}

```

Notice that you must specify the class that the *Square* class inherits from before any interfaces that it implements.

3. In the *Square* class, remove the definitions of the *sideLength*, *rect*, *locX*, and *locY* fields. These fields are no longer necessary because they are now provided by the *DrawingShape* class.
4. Replace the existing constructor with the following code, which calls the constructor in the base class:

```

class Square : DrawingShape, IDraw, IColor
{
    public Square(int sideLength)
        : base(sideLength)
    {
    }
    ...
}

```

Notice that the body of this constructor is empty because the base class constructor performs all the initialization required.

5. Remove the *IDraw.SetLocation* and *IColor.SetColor* methods from the *Square* class. The *DrawingShape* class provides the implementation of these methods.
6. Modify the definition of the *Draw* method. Declare it as *public override*, and remove the reference to the *IDraw* interface. Again, the *DrawingShape* class already provides the base functionality for this method, but you will extend it with specific code required by the *Square* class.

```
public override void Draw(Canvas canvas)
{
    ...
}
```

7. Replace the body of the *Draw* method with the code shown here in bold:

```
public override void Draw(Canvas canvas)
{
    if (this.shape != null)
    {
        canvas.Children.Remove(this.shape);
    }
    else
    {
        this.shape = new Rectangle();
    }
    base.Draw(canvas);
}
```

These statements instantiate the *shape* field inherited from the *DrawingShape* class as a new instance of the *Rectangle* class if it has not already been instantiated, and then they call the *Draw* method in the *DrawingShape* class.

8. Repeat steps 2 through 6 for the *Circle* class, except that the constructor should be called *Circle* with a parameter called *diameter*, and in the *Draw* method you should instantiate the *shape* field as a new *Ellipse* object. The



complete code for the *Circle* class should look like this:

```
class Circle : DrawingShape, IDraw, IColor
{
    public Circle(int diameter)
        : base(diameter)
    {
    }
    public override void Draw(Canvas canvas)
    {
        if (this.shape != null)
        {
            canvas.Children.Remove(this.shape);
        }
        else
        {
            this.shape = new Ellipse();
        }
        base.Draw(canvas);
    }
}
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging. When the Drawing Pad window opens, verify that *Square* objects appear when you left-click in the window and *Circle* objects appear when you right-click in the window. The application should behave exactly the same as before.
10. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

#### COMPATIBILITY WITH THE WINDOWS RUNTIME ON WINDOWS 8 AND WINDOWS 8.1 REVISITED

**Chapter 9** describes how Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 implements the Windows Runtime (WinRT) as a layer on top of the native Windows APIs, providing a simplified programming interface for developers building unmanaged applications (an unmanaged application is an application that does not run by using the .NET Framework; you build them by using a language such as C++ rather than C#). Managed applications use the Common Language Runtime (CLR) to run .NET Framework applications. The .NET Framework provides an extensive set of libraries and features. On Windows 7 and earlier, the CLR implements these features by using the native Windows APIs. If you are building desktop or enterprise applications and services on Windows 8 and Windows 8.1, this same feature set is still available (although the .NET Framework itself has been upgraded to version 4.5), and any C# applications that work on Windows 7 should run unchanged on Windows 8 and Windows 8.1.

On Windows 8 and Windows 8.1, Windows Store apps always run by using WinRT. This means that if you are building Windows Store apps by using a managed language such as C#, the CLR actually

invokes WinRT rather than the native Windows APIs. Microsoft has provided a mapping layer between the CLR and WinRT that can transparently translate requests made to the .NET Framework to create objects and invoke methods into the equivalent object requests and method calls in WinRT. For example, when you create a .NET Framework *Int32* value (an *int* in C#), this code is translated to create a value using the equivalent WinRT data type. However, although the CLR and WinRT have a large amount of overlapping functionality, not all of the features of the .NET Framework 4.5 have corresponding features in WinRT. Consequently, Windows Store apps have access to only a reduced subset of the types and methods provided by the .NET Framework 4.5 (IntelliSense in Visual Studio 2013 automatically shows the restricted view of available features when you are building Windows Store apps when using C#, omitting the types and methods not available through WinRT).

On the other hand, WinRT provides a significant set of features and types that have no direct equivalent in the .NET Framework or that operate in a significantly different way to the corresponding features in the .NET Framework and so cannot easily be translated. WinRT makes these features available to the CLR through a mapping layer that makes them look like .NET Framework types and methods, and you can invoke them directly from managed code. For Windows Store apps, the primary area that this concerns is the way in which the user interface is implemented, and this is why some of the exercises in this book ask you to reference different namespaces for windows desktop applications running on Windows 7 and Windows 8, and Windows Store apps running on Windows 8.1 —*System.Windows* and its subnamespaces for desktop applications versus *Windows.UI* and its subnamespaces for Windows Store apps. These namespaces contain types that are implemented by different assemblies; the types in the *System.Windows* namespace reside in the *WindowsBase*, *PresentationCore*, and *PresentationFramework* assemblies for the .NET Framework 4.5.1, whereas the types in the *Windows.UI* namespace are located in the *Windows* assembly for WinRT.

#### NOTE

Strictly speaking, WinRT does not use assemblies but has its own structure for holding libraries of executable code. However, WinRT libraries expose metadata that is held in the same format as .NET Framework assemblies, thus the CLR can read them. To the CLR, WinRT libraries look and behave like .NET Framework assemblies. The CLR can create objects defined in these libraries and invoke their methods. The difference is that the WinRT creates and manages these objects, but this difference is not visible to your application code running by using the CLR.

So, integration implemented by the CLR and WinRT enables the CLR to transparently use WinRT types, but it also supports interoperability in the reverse direction: You can define types by using managed code and make them available to unmanaged applications as long as these types conform to the expectations of WinRT. [Chapter 9](#) highlights the requirements of structs in this respect (instance and static methods in structs are not available through WinRT, and private fields are unsupported). If you are building classes with the intention that they be consumed by unmanaged applications through WinRT, your classes must follow these rules:

- Any public fields, and the parameters and return values of any public methods must be WinRT types or .NET Framework types that can be transparently translated by WinRT into WinRT types. Examples of supported .NET Framework types include conforming value types (such as structs and enums) and those corresponding to the C# primitives (*int*, *long*, *float*, *double*, *string*, and so on). Private fields are supported in classes, and they can be of any type available in the .NET Framework; they do not have to conform to WinRT.

- Classes cannot override methods of *System.Object* other than *ToString*, and they cannot declare protected constructors.
- The namespace in which a class is defined must be the same as the name of the assembly implementing the class. Additionally, the namespace name (and therefore the assembly name) must not begin with “Windows”.
- You cannot inherit from managed types in unmanaged applications through WinRT. Therefore, all public classes must be sealed. If you need to implement polymorphism, you can create a public interface and implement that interface on the classes that must be polymorphic.
- You can throw any exception type that is included in the subset of the .NET Framework available to Windows Store apps; you cannot create your own custom exception classes. If your code throws an unhandled exception when called from an unmanaged application, WinRT raises an equivalent exception in the unmanaged code.

WinRT has other requirements concerning features of C# code covered later in this book. These requirements will be highlighted as each feature is described.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to define and implement interfaces and abstract classes. The following table summarizes the various valid (yes), invalid (no), and mandatory (required) keyword combinations when defining methods for interfaces, classes, and structs.

Keyword	Interface	Abstract class	Class	Sealed class	Structure
abstract	No	Yes	No	No	No
new	Yes <sup>[a]</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No <sup>[b]</sup>
override	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No <sup>[c]</sup>
private	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
protected	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No <sup>[d]</sup>
public	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
sealed	No	Yes	Yes	Required	No
virtual	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

<sup>[a]</sup> An interface can extend another interface and introduce a new method with the same signature.

[b] Structures do not support inheritance, so they cannot hide methods.

[c] Structures do not support inheritance, so they cannot override methods.

[d] Structures do not support inheritance; a structure is implicitly sealed and cannot be derived from.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 14**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Declare an interface	Use the interface keyword. For example:  <pre>interface IDemo {     string GetName();     string GetDescription(); }</pre>
Implement an interface	Declare a class by using the same syntax as class inheritance, and then implement all the member functions of the interface. For example:  <pre>class Test : IDemo {     public string IDemo.GetName()     {         ...     }     public string IDemo.GetDescription()     {         ...     } }</pre>
Create an abstract class that can be used only as a base class, containing abstract methods	Declare the class by using the abstract keyword. For each abstract method, declare the method with the abstract keyword and without a method body. For example:

Containing abstract methods	and without a method body. For example:  <pre>abstract class GrazingMammal {     abstract void DigestGrass();     ... }</pre>
Create a sealed class that cannot be used as a base class	Declare the class by using the sealed keyword. For example:  <pre>sealed class Horse {     ... }</pre>

# Chapter 14. Using garbage collection and resource management

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Why use the garbage collector?
- Writing destructors
- Exception-safe disposal
- Exception-safe disposal
- Implementing exception-safe disposal

You have seen in earlier chapters how to create variables and objects, and you should understand how memory is allocated when you create variables and objects. (In case you don't remember, value types are created on the stack, and reference types are allocated memory from the heap.) Computers do not have infinite amounts of memory, so memory must be reclaimed when a variable or an object no longer needs it. Value types are destroyed and their memory reclaimed when they go out of scope. That's the easy bit. How about reference types? You create an object by using the *new* keyword, but how and when is an object destroyed? That's what this chapter is all about.

## The life and times of an object

First, let's recap what happens when you create an object.

You create an object by using the *new* operator. The following example creates a new instance of the *Square* class that is discussed in [Chapter 13](#):

```
Square mySquare = new Square(); // Square is a reference type
```

From your point of view, the *new* operation is a single operation, but underneath, object creation is really a two-phase process:

1. The *new* operation allocates a chunk of *raw* memory from the heap. You have no control over this phase of an object's creation.
2. The *new* operation converts the chunk of raw memory to an object; it has to initialize the object. You can control this phase by using a constructor.

#### NOTE

If you are a C++ programmer, you should note that in C#, you cannot overload the *new* operation to control allocation.

After you have created an object, you can access its members by using the dot operator (.). For example, the *Square* class includes a method named *Draw* that you can call:

```
mySquare.Draw();
```

#### NOTE

This code is based on the version of the *Square* class that inherits from the *DrawingShape* abstract class and that does not implement the *IDraw* interface explicitly. For more information, refer to [Chapter 13](#).

When the *mySquare* variable goes out of scope, the *Square* object is no longer being actively referenced, and the object can be destroyed and the memory that it is using can be reclaimed (this might not happen immediately, though, as you will see later). Like object creation, object destruction is a two-phase process. The two phases of destruction exactly mirror the two phases of creation:

1. The Common Language Runtime (CLR) must perform some tidying up. You can control this by writing a *destructor*.

2. The CLR must return the memory previously belonging to the object back to the heap; the memory that the object lived in must be deallocated. You have no control over this phase.

The process of destroying an object and returning memory back to the heap is known as *garbage collection*.

#### NOTE

If you program in C++, keep in mind that C# does not have a delete operator. The CLR controls when an object is destroyed.

## Writing destructors

You can use a destructor to perform any tidying up required when an object is garbage collected. The CLR will automatically clear up any managed resources that an object uses, and in many of these cases, writing a destructor is unnecessary. However, if a managed resource is large (such as a multidimensional array), it might make sense to make this resource available for immediate disposal by setting any references that the object has to this resource to *null*. Additionally, if an object references an unmanaged resource, either directly or indirectly, a destructor can prove useful.

#### NOTE

Indirect unmanaged resources are reasonably common. Examples include file streams, network connections, database connections, and other resources managed by the Microsoft Windows operating system. So, if you open a file in a method, you might want to add a destructor that closes the file when the object is destroyed. However, there might be a better and timelier way to close the file depending on the structure of the code in your class (see the discussion of the *using* statement later in this chapter).

A destructor is a special method, a little like a constructor, except that the CLR calls it after the reference to an object has disappeared. The syntax for writing a destructor is a tilde (~) followed by the name of the class. For example, here's a simple class that opens a file for reading in its constructor and closes the file in its destructor (note that this is simply an example, and I do not recommend that



you always follow this pattern for opening and closing files):

```
class FileProcessor
{
    FileStream file = null;
    public FileProcessor(string fileName)
    {
        this.file = File.OpenRead(fileName); // open file for reading
    }
    ~FileProcessor()
    {
        this.file.Close(); // close file
    }
}
```

There are some very important restrictions that apply to destructors:

- Destructors apply only to reference types; you cannot declare a destructor in a value type, such as a *struct*.

```
struct MyStruct
{
    ~ MyStruct() { ... } // compile-time error
}
```

- You cannot specify an access modifier (such as *public*) for a destructor. You never call the destructor in your own code; part of the CLR called the *garbage collector* does this for you.

```
public ~ FileProcessor() { ... } // compile-time error
```

- A destructor cannot take any parameters. Again, this is because you never call the destructor yourself.

```
~ FileProcessor(int parameter) { ... } // compile-time error
```

Internally, the C# compiler automatically translates a destructor into an override of the *Object.Finalize* method. The compiler converts this destructor

```
class FileProcessor
{
    ~ FileProcessor() { // your code goes here }
```

```
}
```

into this:

```
class FileProcessor
{
    protected override void Finalize()
    {
        try { // your code goes here }
        finally { base.Finalize(); }
    }
}
```

The compiler-generated *Finalize* method contains the destructor body within a *try* block, followed by a *finally* block that calls the *Finalize* method in the base class. (The *try* and *finally* keywords are described in [Chapter 6](#).) This ensures that a destructor always calls its base class destructor, even if an exception occurs during your destructor code.

It's important to understand that only the compiler can make this translation. You can't write your own method to override *Finalize*, and you can't call *Finalize* yourself.

## Why use the garbage collector?

You can never destroy an object yourself by using C# code. There just isn't any syntax to do it. Instead, the CLR does it for you at a time of its own choosing. In addition, keep in mind that you can also make more than one reference variable refer to the same object. In the following code example, the variables *myFp* and *referenceToMyFp* point to the same *FileProcessor* object:

```
FileProcessor myFp = new FileProcessor();
FileProcessor referenceToMyFp = myFp;
```

How many references can you create to an object? As many as you want! This has an impact on the lifetime of an object. The CLR has to keep track of all these references. If the variable *myFp* disappears (by going out of scope), other variables (such as *referenceToMyFp*) might still exist and the resources used by the *FileProcessor* object cannot be reclaimed (the file should not be closed). So,

the lifetime of an object cannot be tied to a particular reference variable. An object can be destroyed and its memory made available for reuse only when *all* the references to it have disappeared.

You can see that managing object lifetimes is complex, which is why the designers of C# decided to prevent your code from taking on this responsibility. If it were *your* responsibility to destroy objects, sooner or later one of the following situations would arise:

- You'd forget to destroy the object. This would mean that the object's destructor (if it had one) would not be run, tidying up would not occur, and memory would not be returned back to the heap. You could quite easily run out of memory.
- You'd try to destroy an active object and risk the possibility of one or more variables holding a reference to a destroyed object, known as a *dangling reference*. A dangling reference refers either to unused memory or possibly to a completely different object that now happens to occupy the same piece of memory. Either way, the outcome of using a dangling reference would be undefined at best or a security risk at worst. All bets would be off.
- You'd try to destroy the same object more than once. This might or might not be disastrous, depending on the code in the destructor.

These problems are unacceptable in a language like C#, which places robustness and security high on its list of design goals. Instead, the garbage collector destroys objects for you. The garbage collector makes the following guarantees:

- Every object will be destroyed, and its destructor will be run. When a program ends, all outstanding objects will be destroyed.
- Every object will be destroyed exactly once.
- Every object will be destroyed only when it becomes unreachable—that is, when there are no references to the object in the process running your application.

These guarantees are tremendously useful and free you, the programmer, from tedious housekeeping chores that are easy to get wrong. They afford you the

luxury to concentrating on the logic of the program itself and being more productive.

When does garbage collection occur? This might seem like a strange question. After all, surely garbage collection occurs when an object is no longer needed. Well, it does, but not necessarily immediately. Garbage collection can be an expensive process, so the CLR collects garbage only when it needs to (when available memory is starting to run low or the size of the heap has exceeded the system-defined threshold, for example), and then it collects as much as it can. Performing a few large sweeps of memory is more efficient than performing lots of little dustings.

#### NOTE

You can invoke the garbage collector in a program by calling the static method *Collect* of the *GC* class located in the *System* namespace. However, except in a few cases, this is not recommended. The *GC.Collect* method starts the garbage collector, but the process runs asynchronously—the *GC.Collect* method does not wait for garbage collection to be complete before it returns, so you still don't know whether your objects have been destroyed. Let the CLR decide when it is best to collect garbage.

One feature of the garbage collector is that you don't know, and should not rely upon, the order in which objects will be destroyed. The final point to understand is arguably the most important: Destructors do not run until objects are garbage collected. If you write a destructor, you know it will be executed, but you just don't know when. Consequently, you should never write code that depends on destructors running in a particular sequence or at a specific point in your application.

## How does the garbage collector work?

The garbage collector runs in its own thread and can execute only at certain times—typically, when your application reaches the end of a method. While it runs, other threads running in your application will temporarily halt. This is because the garbage collector might need to move objects around and update object references, and it cannot do this while objects are in use.

#### NOTE

A *thread* is a separate path of execution in an application. Windows uses threads to facilitate an application performing multiple operations concurrently.

The garbage collector is a complex piece of software that is self-tuning and implements a number of optimizations to try to balance the need to keep memory available against the requirement to maintain the performance of the application. The details of the internal algorithms and structures that the garbage collector uses are beyond the scope of this book (and Microsoft continually refines the way in which the garbage collector performs its work), but at the high level, the steps that the garbage collector takes are as follows:

1. It builds a map of all reachable objects. It does this by repeatedly following reference fields inside objects. The garbage collector builds this map very carefully and ensures that circular references do not cause an infinite recursion. Any object *not* in this map is deemed to be unreachable.
2. It checks whether any of the unreachable objects has a destructor that needs to be run (a process called *finalization*). Any unreachable object that requires finalization is placed in a special queue called the *freachable queue* (pronounced “Freachable”).
3. It deallocates the remaining unreachable objects (those that don’t require finalization) by moving the *reachable* objects down the heap, thus defragmenting the heap and freeing memory at its top. When the garbage collector moves a reachable object, it also updates any references to the object.
4. At this point, it allows other threads to resume.
5. It finalizes the unreachable objects that require finalization (now in the *freachable queue*) by running the *Finalize* methods on its own thread.

## Recommendations

Writing classes that contain destructors adds complexity to your code and to the

garbage collection process, and makes your program run more slowly. If your program does not contain any destructors, the garbage collector does not need to place unreachable objects in the *freachable* queue and finalize them. Clearly, not doing something is faster than doing it. Therefore, try to avoid using destructors except when you really need them; only use them to reclaim unmanaged resources. For example, consider a *using* statement instead, as will be described later in this chapter.

You need to be very careful when you write a destructor. In particular, be aware that, if your destructor calls other objects, those other objects might have *already* had their destructor called by the garbage collector. Remember that the order of finalization is not guaranteed. Therefore, ensure that destructors do not depend on one another or overlap one another—don't have two destructors that try to release the same resource, for example.

## Resource management

Sometimes, it's inadvisable to release a resource in a destructor; some resources are just too valuable to lie around waiting for an arbitrary length of time until the garbage collector actually releases them. Scarce resources such as memory, database connections, or file handles need to be released, and they need to be released as soon as possible. In these situations, your only option is to release the resource yourself. You can achieve this by creating a *disposal method*. A disposal method is a method that explicitly disposes of a resource. If a class has a disposal method, you can call it and control when the resource is released.

### NOTE

The term *disposal method* refers to the purpose of the method rather than its name. A disposal method can be named using any valid C# identifier.

## Disposal methods

An example of a class that implements a disposal method is the *TextReader* class from the *System.IO* namespace. This class provides a mechanism to read characters from a sequential stream of input. The *TextReader* class contains a

virtual method named *Close*, which closes the stream. The *StreamReader* class (which reads characters from a stream, such as an open file) and the *StringReader* class (which reads characters from a string) both derive from *TextReader*, and both override the *Close* method. Here's an example that reads lines of text from a file by using the *StreamReader* class and then displays them on the screen:

```
TextReader reader = new StreamReader(filename);
string line;
while ((line = reader.ReadLine()) != null)
{
    Console.WriteLine(line);
}
reader.Close();
```

The *ReadLine* method reads the next line of text from the stream into a string. The *ReadLine* method returns *null* if there is nothing left in the stream. It's important to call *Close* when you have finished with *reader* to release the file handle and associated resources. However, there is a problem with this example: it's not exception-safe. If the call to *ReadLine* or *WriteLine* throws an exception, the call to *Close* will not happen; it will be bypassed. If this happens often enough, you will run out of file handles and be unable to open any more files.

## Exception-safe disposal

One way to ensure that a disposal method (such as *Close*) is always called, regardless of whether there is an exception, is to call the disposal method within a *finally* block. Here's the preceding example coded by using this technique:

```
TextReader reader = new StreamReader(filename);
try
{
    string line;
    while ((line = reader.ReadLine()) != null)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(line);
    }
}
finally
{
    reader.Close();
}
```

```
}
```

Using a *finally* block like this works, but it has several drawbacks that make it a less-than-ideal solution:

- It quickly becomes unwieldy if you have to dispose of more than one resource. (You end up with nested *try* and *finally* blocks.)
- In some cases, you might need to modify the code to make it fit this idiom. (For example, you might need to reorder the declaration of the resource reference, remember to initialize the reference to *null*, and remember to check that the reference isn't *null* in the *finally* block.)
- It fails to create an abstraction of the solution. This means that the solution is hard to understand and you must repeat the code everywhere you need this functionality.
- The reference to the resource remains in scope after the *finally* block. This means that you can accidentally try to use the resource after it has been released.

The *using* statement is designed to solve all these problems.

## The *using* statement and the *IDisposable* interface

The *using* statement provides a clean mechanism for controlling the lifetimes of resources. You can create an object, and this object will be destroyed when the *using* statement block finishes.

### IMPORTANT

Do not confuse the *using* statement shown in this section with the *using* directive that brings a namespace into scope. It is unfortunate that the same keyword has two different meanings.

The syntax for a *using* statement is as follows:

```
using ( type variable = initialization )  
{
```



```
        StatementBlock
    }
```

Here is the best way to ensure that your code always calls *Close* on a *TextReader*:

```
using (TextReader reader = new StreamReader(filename))
{
    string line;
    while ((line = reader.ReadLine()) != null)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(line);
    }
}
```

This *using* statement is precisely equivalent to the following transformation:

```
{
    TextReader reader = new StreamReader(filename);
    try
    {
        string line;
        while ((line = reader.ReadLine()) != null)
        {
            Console.WriteLine(line);
        }
    }
    finally
    {
        if (reader != null)
        {
            ((IDisposable)reader).Dispose();
        }
    }
}
```

#### NOTE

The *using* statement introduces its own block for scoping purposes. This arrangement means that the variable you declare in a *using* statement automatically goes out of scope at the end of the embedded statement and you cannot accidentally attempt to access a disposed resource.

The variable you declare in a *using* statement must be of a type that implements the *IDisposable* interface. The *IDisposable* interface lives in the *System* namespace and contains just one method, named *Dispose*:

```
namespace System
{
    interface IDisposable
    {
        void Dispose();
    }
}
```

The purpose of the *Dispose* method is to free any resources used by an object. It just so happens that the *StreamReader* class implements the *IDisposable* interface, and its *Dispose* method calls *Close* to close the stream. You can employ a *using* statement as a clean, exception-safe, and robust way to ensure that a resource is always released. This approach solves all of the problems that existed in the manual *try/finally* solution. You now have a solution that

- Scales well if you need to dispose of multiple resources.
- Doesn't distort the logic of the program code.
- Abstracts away the problem and avoids repetition.
- Is robust. You can't accidentally reference the variable declared within the *using* statement (in this case, *reader*) after the *using* statement has ended because it's not in scope anymore—you'll get a compile-time error.

## Calling the *Dispose* method from a destructor

When writing your own classes, should you write a destructor or implement the *IDisposable* interface so that instances of your class can be managed by a *using* statement? A call to a destructor *will* happen, but you just don't know when. On the other hand, you know exactly when a call to the *Dispose* method happens, but you just can't be sure that it will actually happen, because it relies on the programmer using your classes remembering to write a *using* statement.

However, it is possible to ensure that the *Dispose* method always runs by calling it from the destructor. This acts as a useful backup. You might forget to call the

*Dispose* method, but at least you can be sure that it will be called, even if it's only when the program shuts down. You will investigate this feature in detail in the exercises at the end of the chapter, but here's an example of how you might implement the *IDisposable* interface:

```
class Example : IDisposable
{
    private Resource scarce;          // scarce resource to manage and dispose
    private bool disposed = false;    // flag to indicate whether the resource
                                      // has already been disposed

    ...
    ~Example()
    {
        this.Dispose(false);
    }
    public virtual void Dispose()
    {
        this.Dispose(true);
        GC.SuppressFinalize(this);
    }
    protected virtual void Dispose(bool disposing)
    {
        if (!this.disposed)
        {
            if (disposing)
            {
                // release large, managed resource here
                ...
            }
            // release unmanaged resources here
            ...
            this.disposed = true;
        }
    }
    public void SomeBehavior() // example method
    {
        checkIfDisposed();
        ...
    }
    ...
    private void checkIfDisposed()
    {
        if (this.disposed)
        {
            throw new ObjectDisposedException("Example: object has been disposed
of");
        }
    }
}
```

```

    }
}
}

```

Notice the following features of the *Example* class:

- The class implements the *IDisposable* interface.
- The public *Dispose* method can be called at any time by your application code.
- The public *Dispose* method calls the protected and overloaded version of the *Dispose* method that takes a Boolean parameter, passing the value *true* as the argument. This method actually performs the resource disposal.
- The destructor calls the protected and overloaded version of the *Dispose* method that takes a Boolean parameter, passing the value *false* as the argument. The destructor is called only by the garbage collector, when your object is being finalized.
- You can call the protected *Dispose* method safely multiple times. The variable *disposed* indicates whether the method has already been run and is a safety feature to prevent the method from attempting to dispose the resources multiple times if it is called concurrently. (Your application might call *Dispose*, but before the method completes, your object might be garbage-collected and the *Dispose* method run again by the CLR from destructor.) The resources are released only the first time the method runs.
- The protected *Dispose* method supports disposal of managed resources (such as a large array) and unmanaged resources (such as a file handle). If the disposing parameter is true, this method must have been called from the public *Dispose* method. In this case, the managed resources and unmanaged resources are all released. If the disposing parameter is false, this method must have been called from the destructor, and the garbage collector is finalizing the object. In this case, it is not necessary (or exception-safe) to release the managed resources, because they will be, or might already have been, handled by the garbage collector, so only the unmanaged resources are released.

- The public *Dispose* method calls the static *GC.SuppressFinalize* method. This method stops the garbage collector from calling the destructor on this object, because the object has already been finalized.
- All the regular methods of the class (such as *SomeBehavior*) check to see whether the object has already been discarded. If it has, they throw an exception.

## Implementing exception-safe disposal

In the following set of exercises, you will examine how the *using* statement helps to ensure that resources used by objects in your applications can be released in a timely manner, even if an exception occurs in your application code. Initially, you will implement a simple class that implements a destructor and examine when this destructor is invoked by the garbage collector.

### NOTE

The *Calculator* class created in these exercises is intended to show the essential principles of garbage collection for illustrative purposes only. The class does not actually consume any significant managed or unmanaged resources. You would not normally create a destructor or implement the *IDisposable* interface for such a simple class as this.

Create a simple class that uses a destructor

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project.  
The New Project dialog box opens.
3. In the New Project dialog box, in the left pane under Templates, click Visual C#. In the middle pane, select the Console Application template. In the Name box near the bottom of the dialog box, type **GarbageCollectionDemo**. In the Location field, specify the folder Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 14 in your Documents folder, and then click OK.

#### TIP

You can use the Browse button adjacent to the Location field to navigate to the Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 14 folder rather than typing in the path manually.

Visual Studio creates a new console application and displays the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

4. On the Project menu, click Add Class.

The Add New Item – GarbageCollectionDemo dialog box opens.

5. In the Add New Item – GarbageCollectionDemo dialog box, ensure that the Class template is selected. In the Name box, type **Calculator.cs**, and then click Add.

The *Calculator* class is created and displayed in the Code and Text Editor window.

6. Add the following public *Divide* method shown in bold to the *Calculator* class:

```
class Calculator
{
    public int Divide(int first, int second)
    {
        return first / second;
    }
}
```

This is a very straightforward method that divides the first parameter by the second and returns the result. It is provided just to add a bit of functionality that can be called by an application.

7. Above the *Divide* method, add the public constructor shown in bold in the code that follows to the start of the *Calculator* class:

```
class Calculator
{
```

```

    public Calculator()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Calculator being created");
    }
    ...
}

```

The purpose of this constructor is to enable you to verify that a *Calculator* object has been successfully created.

8. Add the destructor shown in bold in the following code to the *Calculator* class, after the constructor:

```

class Calculator
{
    ...
    ~Calculator()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Calculator being finalized");
    }
    ...
}

```

This destructor simply displays a message so that you can see when the garbage collector runs and finalizes instances of this class. When writing classes for real-world applications, you would not normally output text in a destructor.

9. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
10. In the *Program* class, add the following statements shown in bold to the *Main* method:

```

static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Calculator calculator = new Calculator();
    Console.WriteLine("{0} / {1} = {2}", 120, 15, calculator.Divide(120, 15));
    Console.WriteLine("Program finishing");
}

```

This code creates a *Calculator* object, calls the *Divide* method of this

object (and displays the result), and then outputs a message as the program finishes.

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the program displays the following series of messages:

```
Calculator being created  
120 / 15 = 8  
Program finishing  
Calculator being finalized
```

Notice that the finalizer for the *Calculator* object runs only when the application is about to finish, after the *Main* method has completed.

12. In the console window, press the Enter key and return to Visual Studio 2013.

The CLR guarantees that all objects created by your applications will be subject to garbage collection, but you cannot always be sure when this will happen. In the exercise, the program was very short-lived and the *Calculator* object was finalized when the CLR tidied up as the program finished. However, you might also find that this is the case in more substantial applications with classes that consume scarce resources, and unless you take the necessary steps to provide a means of disposal, the objects that your applications create might retain their resources until the application finishes. If the resource is a file, this could prevent other users from being able to access that file; if the resource is a database connection, your application could prevent other users from being able to connect to the same database. Ideally, you want to free resources as soon as you have finished using them rather than waiting for the application to terminate.

In the next exercise, you will implement the *IDisposable* interface in the *Calculator* class and enable the program to finalize *Calculator* objects at a time of its choosing.

Implement the *IDisposable* interface

1. Display the Calculator.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Modify the definition of the *Calculator* class so that it implements the *IDisposable* interface, as shown here in bold:



```
class Calculator : IDisposable
{
    ...
}
```

3. Add the following method, named *Dispose*, to the end of the *Calculator* class. This method is defined by the *IDisposable* interface:

```
class Calculator : IDisposable
{
    ...
    public void Dispose()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Calculator being disposed");
    }
}
```

You would normally add code to the *Dispose* method that releases the resources held by the object. There are none in this case, and the purpose of the *Console.WriteLine* statement in this method is just so that you can see when the *Dispose* method is run. However, you can see that in a real-world application, there would likely be some duplication of code between the destructor and the *Dispose* method. To remove this duplication, you would typically place this code in one place and call it from the other. Seeing as you cannot explicitly invoke a destructor from the *Dispose* method, it makes sense instead to call the *Dispose* method from the destructor and place the logic that releases resources in the *Dispose* method.

4. Modify the destructor so that it calls the *Dispose* method, as shown in bold in the following code (leave the statement displaying the message in place in the finalizer so that you can see when it is being run by the garbage collector):

```
~Calculator()
{
    Console.WriteLine("Calculator being finalized");
    this.Dispose();
}
```

When you want to destroy a *Calculator* object in an application, the *Dispose* method does not run automatically; your code must either call it explicitly (with a statement such as *calculator.Dispose()*) or create the *Calculator* object within a *using* statement. In your program, you will adopt the latter approach.

5. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. Modify the statements in the *Main* method that create the *Calculator* object and call the *Divide* method, as shown here in bold:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    using (Calculator calculator = new Calculator())
    {
        Console.WriteLine("{0} / {1} = {2}", 120, 15, calculator.Divide(120,
15));
    }

    Console.WriteLine("Program finishing");
}
```

6. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the program now displays the following series of messages:

```
Calculator being created
120 / 15 = 8
Calculator being disposed
Program finishing
Calculator being finalized
Calculator being disposed
```

The *using* statement causes the *Dispose* method to run before the statement that displays the “Program finishing” message. However, you can see that the destructor for the *Calculator* object still runs when the application finishes, and it calls the *Dispose* method again. This is clearly a waste of processing.

7. In the console window, press the Enter key and return to Visual Studio 2013.

Disposing of the resources held by an object more than once might or might not be disastrous, but it is definitely not good practice. The recommended approach to resolving this problem is to add a private Boolean field to the class to indicate whether the *Dispose* method has already been invoked, and then examine this field in the *Dispose* method.

Prevent an object from being disposed of more than once

1. Display the Calculator.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add a private Boolean field called *disposed* to the *Calculator* class, and initialize the value of this field to *false*, as shown in bold in the following:

```
class Calculator : IDisposable
{
    private bool disposed = false;
    ...
}
```

The purpose of this field is to track the state of this object and indicate whether the *Dispose* method has been invoked.

3. Modify the code in the *Dispose* method to display the message only if the *disposed* field is false. After displaying the message, set the *disposed* field to true, as demonstrated here in bold:

```
public void Dispose()
{
    if (!this.disposed)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Calculator being disposed");
    }
    this.disposed = true;
}
```

4. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Notice that the program displays the following series of messages:

```
Calculator being created
120 / 15 = 8
Calculator being disposed
Program finishing
```

Calculator being finalized

The *Calculator* object is now only being discarded once, but the destructor is still running. Again, this is a waste; there is little point in running a destructor for an object that has already released its resources.

5. In the console window, press the Enter key and return to Visual Studio 2013.
6. In the *Calculator* class, add the following statement shown in bold to the end of the *Dispose* method:

```
public void Dispose()
{
    if (!disposed)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Calculator being disposed");
    }
    this.disposed = true;
    GC.SuppressFinalize(this);
}
```

The *GC* class provides access to the garbage collector, and it implements several static methods with which you can control some of the actions it performs. Using the *SuppressFinalize* method, you can indicate that the garbage collector should not perform finalization on the specified object, and this prevents the destructor from running.

#### IMPORTANT

The *GC* class exposes a number of methods with which you can configure the garbage collector. However, it is usually better to let the CLR manage the garbage collector itself, as you can seriously impair the performance of your application if you call these methods in judiciously. You should treat the *SuppressFinalize* method with extreme caution because if you fail to dispose of an object, you run the risk of losing data (if you fail to close a file correctly, for example, any data buffered in memory but not yet written to disk could be lost). Call this method only in situations such as that shown in this exercise, when you-know that an object has already been discarded.

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Notice that the

program displays the following series of messages:

```
Calculator being created
120 / 15 = 8
Calculator being disposed
Program finishing
```

You can see that the destructor is no longer running because the *Calculator* object has already been disposed of before the program finishes.

8. In the console window, press the Enter key and return to Visual Studio 2013.

### THREAD SAFETY AND THE *DISPOSE* METHOD

The example of using the *disposed* field to prevent an object from being discarded multiple times works well in most cases, but keep in mind that you have no control over when the finalizer runs. In the exercises in this chapter, it has always executed as the program finishes, but this might not always be the case—it can run any time after the last reference to an object has disappeared. So, it is possible that the finalizer might actually be invoked by the garbage collector on its own thread while the *Dispose* method is being run, especially if the *Dispose* method has to do a significant amount of work. You could reduce the possibility of resources being released multiple times by moving the statement that sets the *disposed* field to true closer to the start of the *Dispose* method, but in this case you run the risk of not freeing the resources at all if an exception occurs after you have set this variable but before you have released them.

To completely eliminate the chances of two concurrent threads disposing of the same resources in the same object simultaneously, you can write your code in a thread-safe manner, by embedding it in a C# *lock* statement, like this:

```
public void Dispose()
{
    lock(this)
    {
        if (!disposed)
        {
            Console.WriteLine("Calculator being disposed");
        }
        this.disposed = true;
        GC.SuppressFinalize(this);
    }
}
```

The purpose of the *lock* statement is to prevent the same block of code from being run at the same time

on different threads. The argument to the *lock* statement (*this* in the preceding example) should be a reference to an object. The code between the curly braces defines the scope of the *lock* statement. When execution reaches the *lock* statement, if the specified object is currently locked, the thread requesting the lock is blocked and the code is suspended at this point. When the thread that currently holds the lock reaches the closing curly brace of the *lock* statement, the lock is released, enabling the blocked thread to acquire the lock itself and continue. However, by the time this happens, the *disposed* field will have been set to true, so the second thread will not attempt to perform the code in the *if (!disposed)* block.

Using locks in this manner is safe but can impair performance. An alternative approach is to use the strategy described earlier in this chapter, whereby only the repeated disposal of managed resources is suppressed (it is not exception-safe to dispose of managed resources more than once; you will not compromise the security of your computer, but you might affect the logical integrity of your application if you attempt to dispose of a managed object that no longer exists). This strategy implements overloaded versions of the *Dispose* method; the *using* statement calls *Dispose()*, which in turn runs the statement *Dispose(true)*, while the destructor invokes *Dispose(false)*. Managed resources are only freed if the parameter to the overloaded version of the *Dispose* method is true. For more information, refer back to the example in the section “Calling the dispose method from a destructor.”

The purpose of the *using* statement is to ensure that an object is always discarded, even if an exception occurs while it is being used. In the final exercise in this chapter, you will verify that this is the case by generating an exception in the middle of a *using* block.

Verify that an object is disposed of after an exception

1. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Modify the statement that calls the *Divide* method of the *Calculator* object, as shown in bold:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    using (Calculator calculator = new Calculator())
    {
        Console.WriteLine("{0} / {1} = {2}", 120, 0, calculator.Divide(120,
0));
    }
    Console.WriteLine("Program finishing");
}
```

The amended statement attempts to divide 120 by 0.

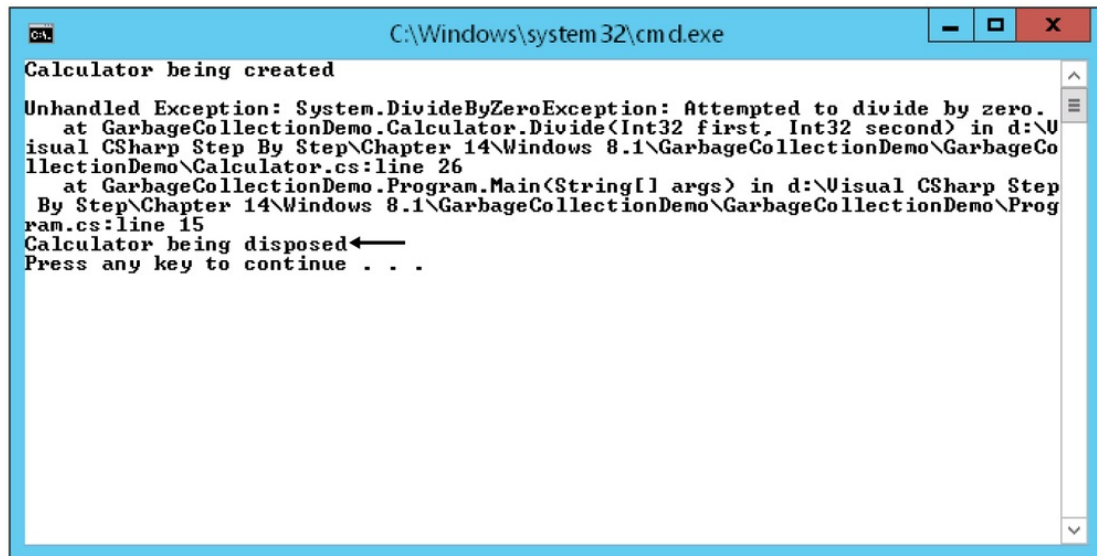
3. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

As you might have anticipated, the application throws an unhandled

*DivideByZeroException* exception.

4. In the GarbageCollectionDemo message box, click Cancel (you need to be quick, before the Debug and Close Program buttons appear).

Verify that the message “Calculator being disposed” appears after the unhandled exception in the console window.



```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
Calculator being created
Unhandled Exception: System.DivideByZeroException: Attempted to divide by zero.
   at GarbageCollectionDemo.Calculator.Divide(Int32 first, Int32 second) in d:\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 14\Windows 8.1\GarbageCollectionDemo\GarbageCollectionDemo\Calculator.cs:line 26
   at GarbageCollectionDemo.Program.Main(String[] args) in d:\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 14\Windows 8.1\GarbageCollectionDemo\GarbageCollectionDemo\Program.cs:line 15
Calculator being disposed
Press any key to continue . . .
```

#### NOTE

If you were too slow and the Debug and Close Program buttons have already appeared, click Close Program and run the application again without debugging.

5. In the console window, press the Enter key and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how the garbage collector works and how the .NET Framework uses it to dispose of objects and reclaim memory. You learned how to write a destructor to clean up the resources used by an object when memory is recycled by the garbage collector. You also saw how to use the *using* statement to implement exception-safe disposal of resources and how to implement the *IDisposable* interface to support this form of object disposal.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 15**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Write a destructor	<p>Write a method whose name is the same as the name of the class and is prefixed with a tilde (~). The method must not have an access modifier (such as public) and cannot have any parameters or return a value. For example:</p> <pre> class Example {     ~Example()     {         ...     } } </pre>
Call a destructor	You can't call a destructor. Only the garbage collector can call a destructor.
Force garbage collection (not recommended)	Call GC.Collect.
Release a resource at a known point in time (but at the risk of resource leaks if an exception interrupts the execution)	<p>Write a disposal method (a method that disposes of a resource) and call it explicitly from the program. For example:</p> <pre> class TextReader {     ...     public virtual void Close()     {         ...     } } class Example {     void Use() </pre>



	<pre> ... {     TextReader reader = ...;     // use reader     reader.Close(); } </pre>
Support exception-safe disposal in a class	<p>Implement the IDisposable interface. For example:</p> <pre> class SafeResource : IDisposable {     ...     public void Dispose()     {         // Dispose resources here     } } </pre>
Implement exception-safe disposal for an object that implements the IDisposable interface	<p>Create the object in a using statement. For example:</p> <pre> using (SafeResource resource = new SafeResource()) {     // Use SafeResource here     ... } </pre>

# Part III. Defining extensible types with C#

---

Chapter 15

Chapter 16

Chapter 17

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Chapter 22

# Chapter 15. Implementing properties to access fields

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Implementing encapsulation by using methods
- Read-only properties
- Write-only properties
- Declaring interface properties
- Property accessibility
- Generating automatic properties
- Initializing objects by using properties

This chapter looks at how to define and use properties to encapsulate fields and data in a class. Previous chapters emphasize that you should make the fields in a class private and provide methods to store values in them and to retrieve their values. This approach ensures safe and controlled access to fields and makes it possible for you to encapsulate additional logic and rules concerning the values that are permitted. However, the syntax for accessing a field in this way is unnatural. When you want to read or write a variable, you normally use an assignment statement, so calling a method to achieve the same effect on a field (which is, after all, just a variable) feels a little clumsy. Properties are designed to alleviate this awkwardness.

## Implementing encapsulation by using methods

First, let's recap the original motivation for using methods to hide fields.

Consider the following structure that represents a position on a computer screen as a pair of coordinates, *x* and *y*. Assume that the range of valid values for the *x*-coordinate lies between 0 and 1280, and the range of valid values for the *y*-coordinate lies between 0 and 1024.

```
struct ScreenPosition
{
    public int X;
    public int Y;
    public ScreenPosition(int x, int y)
    {
        this.X = rangeCheckedX(x);
        this.Y = rangeCheckedY(y);
    }
    private static int rangeCheckedX(int x)
    {
        if (x < 0 || x > 1280)
        {
            throw new ArgumentOutOfRangeException("X");
        }
        return x;
    }
    private static int rangeCheckedY(int y)
    {
        if (y < 0 || y > 1024)
        {
            throw new ArgumentOutOfRangeException("Y");
        }
        return y;
    }
}
```

One problem with this structure is that it does not follow the golden rule of encapsulation—that is, it does not keep its data private. Public data is often a bad idea because the class cannot control the values that an application specifies. For example, the *ScreenPosition* constructor range checks its parameters to ensure that they are in a specified range, but no such check can be done on the “raw” access to the public fields. Sooner or later (probably sooner), an error or misunderstanding on the part of a developer using this class in an application can cause either *X* or *Y* to stray out of this range:

```
ScreenPosition origin = new ScreenPosition(0, 0);
```

```
...
int xpos = origin.X;
origin.Y = -100; // oops
```

The common way to solve this problem is to make the fields private and add an accessor method and a modifier method to respectively read and write the value of each private field. The modifier methods can then range-check new field values. For example, the code that follows contains an accessor (*GetX*) and a modifier (*SetX*) for the *X* field. Notice that *SetX* checks its parameter value.

```
struct ScreenPosition
{
    ...
    public int GetX()
    {
        return this.x;
    }
    public void SetX(int newX)
    {
        this.x = rangeCheckedX(newX);
    }
    ...
    private static int rangeCheckedX(int x) { ... }
    private static int rangeCheckedY(int y) { ... }
    private int x, y;
}
```

The code now successfully enforces the range constraints, which is good. However, there is a price to pay for this valuable guarantee—*ScreenPosition* no longer has a natural field-like syntax; it uses awkward method-based syntax, instead. The example that follows increases the value of *X* by 10. To do so, it has to read the value of *X* by using the *GetX* accessor method and then write the value of *X* by using the *SetX* modifier method.

```
int xpos = origin.GetX();
origin.SetX(xpos + 10);
```

Compare this with the equivalent code if the *X* field were public:

```
origin.X += 10;
```

There is no doubt that in this case using a public field is conceptually cleaner.

There is no doubt that, in this case, using public fields is syntactically cleaner, shorter, and easier. Unfortunately, using public fields breaks encapsulation. Using properties, you can combine the best of both worlds (fields and methods) to retain encapsulation while providing a field-like syntax.

## What are properties?

A *property* is a cross between a field and a method—it looks like a field but acts like a method. You access a property by using exactly the same syntax that you use to access a field. However, the compiler automatically translates this field-like syntax into calls to accessor methods (sometimes referred to as *property getters* and *property setters*).

The syntax for a property declaration looks like this:

```
AccessModifier Type PropertyName
{
    get
    {
        // read accessor code
    }
    set
    {
        // write accessor code
    }
}
```

A property can contain two blocks of code, starting with the *get* and *set* keywords. The *get* block contains statements that execute when the property is read, and the *set* block contains statements that run upon writing to the property. The type of the property specifies the type of data read and written by the *get* and *set* accessors.

The next code example shows the *ScreenPosition* structure rewritten by using properties. When looking at this code, notice the following:

- Lowercase *\_x* and *\_y* are *private* fields.
- Uppercase *X* and *Y* are *public* properties.
- All *set* accessors are passed the data to be written by using a hidden, built-in

parameter named *value*.

```
struct ScreenPosition
{
    private int x, y;
    public ScreenPosition(int X, int Y)
    {
        this._x = rangeCheckedX(X);
        this._y = rangeCheckedY(Y);
    }
    public int X
    {
        get { return this._x; }
        set { this._x = rangeCheckedX(value); }
    }
    public int Y
    {
        get { return this._y; }
        set { this._y = rangeCheckedY(value); }
    }
    private static int rangeCheckedX(int x) { ... }
    private static int rangeCheckedY(int y) { ... }
}
```

In this example, a private field directly implements each property, but this is only one way to implement a property. All that is required is that a *get* accessor returns a value of the specified type. Such a value can easily be calculated dynamically rather than being simply retrieved from stored data, in which case there would be no need for a physical field.

#### NOTE

Although the examples in this chapter show how to define properties for a structure, they are equally applicable to classes; the syntax is the same.

**PROPERTIES AND FIELD NAMES: A WARNING THE SECTION **NAMING VARIABLES** IN **CHAPTER 2** DESCRIBES SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NAMING VARIABLES. IN PARTICULAR, IT STATES THAT YOU SHOULD AVOID STARTING AN IDENTIFIER WITH AN UNDERSCORE. HOWEVER, YOU CAN SEE THAT THE **SCREENPOSITION** STRUCT DOES NOT COMPLETELY FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE; IT CONTAINS TWO FIELDS NAMED **\_X** AND **\_Y**.**

THERE IS A GOOD REASON FOR THIS ANOMALY. THE SIDEBAR “NAMING AND ACCESSIBILITY” IN **CHAPTER 7** DESCRIBES HOW IT IS COMMON TO USE IDENTIFIERS THAT START WITH AN UPPERCASE LETTER FOR PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE METHODS AND FIELDS, AND TO USE IDENTIFIERS THAT START WITH A LOWERCASE LETTER FOR PRIVATE METHODS AND FIELDS. TAKEN TOGETHER, THESE TWO PRACTICES CAN CAUSE YOU TO GIVE PROPERTIES AND PRIVATE FIELDS THE SAME NAME THAT DIFFERS ONLY IN THE CASE OF THE INITIAL LETTER, AND MANY ORGANIZATIONS DO PRECISELY THIS.

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION FOLLOWS THIS APPROACH, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF ONE IMPORTANT DRAWBACK. EXAMINE THE FOLLOWING CODE, WHICH IMPLEMENTS A CLASS NAMED *EMPLOYEE*. THE *EMPLOYEEID* FIELD IS PRIVATE, BUT THE *EMPLOYEEID* PROPERTY PROVIDES PUBLIC ACCESS TO THIS FIELD.

```
CLASS EMPLOYEE
{
    PRIVATE INT EMPLOYEEID;
    PUBLIC INT EMPLOYEEID
    {
        GET { RETURN THIS.EMPLOYEEID; }
        SET { THIS.EMPLOYEEID = VALUE; }
    }
}
```

THIS CODE WILL COMPILE PERFECTLY WELL, BUT IT RESULTS IN A PROGRAM RAISING A *STACKOVERFLOWEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION WHENEVER THE *EMPLOYEEID* PROPERTY IS ACCESSED. THIS IS BECAUSE THE *GET* AND *SET* ACCESSORS REFERENCE THE PROPERTY (UPPERCASE *E*) RATHER THAN THE PRIVATE FIELD (LOWERCASE *e*), WHICH CAUSES AN ENDLESS RECURSIVE LOOP THAT EVENTUALLY CAUSES THE PROCESS TO EXHAUST THE AVAILABLE MEMORY. THIS TYPE OF BUG IS VERY DIFFICULT TO SPOT! FOR THIS REASON, THE EXAMPLES IN THIS BOOK NAME THE PRIVATE FIELDS USED TO PROVIDE THE DATA FOR PROPERTIES WITH A LEADING UNDERSCORE; IT MAKES THEM MUCH EASIER TO DISTINGUISH FROM THE NAMES OF PROPERTIES. ALL OTHER PRIVATE FIELDS WILL CONTINUE TO USE CAMELCASE IDENTIFIERS WITHOUT A LEADING UNDERSCORE.

## Using properties

When you use a property in an expression, you can use it in a read context (when you are retrieving its value) and in a write context (when you are modifying its value). The following example shows how to read values from the *X* and *Y* properties of the *ScreenPosition* structure:

```
ScreenPosition origin = new ScreenPosition(0, 0);
int xpos = origin.X;    // calls origin.X.get
```



```
int ypos = origin.Y;    // calls origin.Y.get
```

Notice that you access properties and fields by using identical syntax. When you use a property in a read context, the compiler automatically translates your field-like code into a call to the *get* accessor of that property. Similarly, if you use a property in a write context, the compiler automatically translates your field-like code into a call to the *set* accessor of that property.

```
origin.X = 40;          // calls origin.X.set, with value set to 40
origin.Y = 100;         // calls origin.Y.Set, with value set to 100
```

The values being assigned are passed in to the *set* accessors by using the *value* variable, as described in the preceding section. The runtime does this automatically.

It's also possible to use a property in a read/write context. In this case, both the *get* accessor and the *set* accessor are used. For example, the compiler automatically translates statements such as the following into calls to the *get* and *set* accessors:

```
origin.X += 10;
```

#### TIP

You can declare *static* properties in the same way that you can declare *static* fields and methods. You can access static properties by using the name of the class or structure rather than an instance of the class or structure.

## Read-only properties

You can declare a property that contains only a *get* accessor. In this case, you can use the property only in a read context. For example, here's the *X* property of the *ScreenPosition* structure declared as a read-only property:

```
struct ScreenPosition
{
    private int x;
    ...
    public int X
    {
        get { return this.x; }
    }
}
```

The *X* property does not contain a *set* accessor; therefore, any attempt to use *X* in a write context will fail, as demonstrated in the following example:

```
origin.X = 140; // compile-time error
```

## Write-only properties

Similarly, you can declare a property that contains only a *set* accessor. In this case, you can use the property only in a write context. For example, here's the *X* property of the *ScreenPosition* structure declared as a write-only property:

```
struct ScreenPosition
{
    private int x;
    ...
    public int X
    {
        set { this.x = rangeCheckedX(value); }
    }
}
```

The *X* property does not contain a *get* accessor; any attempt to use *X* in a read context will fail, as illustrated here:

```
Console.WriteLine(origin.X);    // compile-time error
origin.X = 200;                 // compiles OK
origin.X += 10;                 // compile-time error
```

### NOTE

Write-only properties are useful for secure data such as passwords. Ideally, an application that implements security should allow you to set your password but should never allow you to read it back. When a user attempts to log on, the user can provide the password. The logon method can compare this password with the stored password and return only an indication of whether they match.

## Property accessibility

You can specify the accessibility of a property (*public*, *private*, or *protected*) when you declare it. However, it is possible within the property declaration to override the property accessibility for the *get* and *set* accessors. For example, the version of the *ScreenPosition* structure shown in the code that follows defines the *set* accessors of the *X* and *Y* properties as *private*. (The *get* accessors are *public*, because the properties are *public*.)

```
struct ScreenPosition
{
    private int x, y;
    ...
    public int X
    {
```

```

        get { return this._x; }
        private set { this._x = rangeCheckedX(value); }
    }
    public int Y
    {
        get { return this._y; }
        private set { this._y = rangeCheckedY(value); }
    }
    ...
}

```

You must observe some rules when defining accessors with different accessibility from one another:

- You can change the accessibility of only one of the accessors when you define it. It wouldn't make much sense to define a property as *public* only to change the accessibility of both accessors to *private* anyway.
- The modifier must not specify an accessibility that is less restrictive than that of the property. For example, if the property is declared as *private*, you cannot specify the read accessor as *public*. (Instead, you would make the property *public* and make the write accessor *private*.)

## Understanding the property restrictions

Properties look, act, and feel like fields when you read or write data using them. However, they are not true fields, and certain restrictions apply to them:

- You can assign a value through a property of a structure or class only after the structure or class has been initialized. The following code example is illegal because the `location` variable has not been initialized (by using *new*):

```

ScreenPosition location;
location.X = 40; // compile-time error, location not assigned

```

### NOTE

This might seem trivial, but if *X* were a field rather than a property, the code would be legal. For this reason, you should define structures and classes by using properties from the beginning rather than by using fields that you later migrate to properties. Code that uses your classes and structures might no longer work after you change fields into properties. You will return to this matter in the section [Generating automatic properties](#) later in this chapter.

- You can't use a property as a *ref* or an *out* argument to a method (although you can use a writable field as a *ref* or an *out* argument). This makes sense because the property doesn't really point to a memory location; rather, it points to an accessor method, such as in the following example:

```
MyMethod(ref location.X); // compile-time error
```

- A property can contain at most one *get* accessor and one *set* accessor. A property cannot contain other methods, fields, or properties.
- The *get* and *set* accessors cannot take any parameters. The data being assigned is passed to the *set* accessor automatically by using the *value* variable.
- You can't declare *const* properties, such as is demonstrated here:

```
const int X { get { ... } set { ... } } // compile-time error
```

**USING PROPERTIES APPROPRIATELY PROPERTIES ARE A POWERFUL FEATURE, AND USED IN THE CORRECT MANNER, THEY CAN HELP TO MAKE CODE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND AND MAINTAIN. HOWEVER, THEY ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR CAREFUL OBJECT-ORIENTED DESIGN THAT FOCUSES ON THE BEHAVIOR OF OBJECTS RATHER THAN ON THE PROPERTIES OF OBJECTS. ACCESSING PRIVATE FIELDS THROUGH REGULAR METHODS OR THROUGH PROPERTIES DOES NOT, BY ITSELF, MAKE YOUR CODE WELL-DESIGNED. FOR EXAMPLE, A BANK ACCOUNT HOLDS A BALANCE INDICATING THE FUNDS AVAILABLE IN THE ACCOUNT. YOU MIGHT THEREFORE BE TEMPTED TO CREATE A *BALANCE* PROPERTY ON A *BANKACCOUNT* CLASS, LIKE THIS:**

```
CLASS BANKACCOUNT
{
    PRIVATE DECIMAL BALANCE;
    ...
    PUBLIC DECIMAL BALANCE
    {
        GET { RETURN THIS.BALANCE; }
        SET { THIS._BALANCE = VALUE; }
    }
}
```

THIS IS A POOR DESIGN BECAUSE IT FAILS TO REPRESENT THE FUNCTIONALITY REQUIRED WHEN WITHDRAWING MONEY FROM OR DEPOSITING MONEY INTO AN ACCOUNT. (IF YOU KNOW OF A BANK THAT ALLOWS YOU TO CHANGE THE BALANCE OF YOUR ACCOUNT DIRECTLY WITHOUT PHYSICALLY PUTTING MONEY INTO THE ACCOUNT, PLEASE LET ME KNOW!) WHEN YOU'RE PROGRAMMING, TRY TO EXPRESS THE PROBLEM YOU'RE SOLVING IN THE SOLUTION AND DON'T GET LOST IN A MASS OF LOW-LEVEL SYNTAX. AS THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATES, PROVIDE *DEPOSIT* AND *WITHDRAW* METHODS FOR THE *BANKACCOUNT* CLASS RATHER THAN A PROPERTY SETTER:

```
CLASS BANKACCOUNT
{
    PRIVATE DECIMAL BALANCE;
    ...
    PUBLIC DECIMAL BALANCE { GET { RETURN THIS.BALANCE; } }
    PUBLIC VOID DEPOSIT(MONEY AMOUNT) { ... }
    PUBLIC BOOL WITHDRAW(MONEY AMOUNT) { ... }
}
```

## Declaring interface properties

You encountered interfaces in [Chapter 13](#). Interfaces can define properties as well as methods. To do this, you specify the *get* or *set* keyword, or both, but replace the body of the *get* or *set* accessor with a semicolon, as shown here:

```
interface IScreenPosition
{
    int X { get; set; }
    int Y { get; set; }
}
```

Any class or structure that implements this interface must implement the *X* and *Y* properties with *get* and *set* accessor methods.

```
struct ScreenPosition : IScreenPosition
{
    ...
    public int X
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
}
```

```

        set { ... }
    }
    public int Y
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    ...
}

```

If you implement the interface properties in a class, you can declare the property implementations as *virtual*, which enables derived classes to override the implementations.

```

class ScreenPosition : IScreenPosition
{
    ...
    public virtual int X
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    public virtual int Y
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    ...
}

```

#### NOTE

This example shows a *class*. Remember that the *virtual* keyword is not valid when creating a *struct* because structures do not support inheritance.

You can also choose to implement a property by using the explicit interface implementation syntax covered in [Chapter 13](#). An explicit implementation of a property is nonpublic and nonvirtual (and cannot be overridden).

```

struct ScreenPosition : IScreenPosition
{
    ...
    int IScreenPosition.X
}

```

```

    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    int IScreenPosition.Y
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    ...
}

```

## Replacing methods with properties

**Chapter 13** teaches you how to create a drawing application with which the user can place circles and squares on a canvas in a window. In the exercises in that chapter, you factor the common functionality for the *Circle* and *Square* classes into an abstract class called *DrawingShape*. The *DrawingShape* class provides the *SetLocation* and *SetColor* methods which make it possible for the application to specify the position and color of a shape on the screen. In the following exercise, you will modify the *DrawingShape* class to expose the location and color of a shape as properties.

Use properties

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Drawing project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 15\Windows X\Drawing Using Properties folder in your Documents folder.
3. Display the DrawingShape.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file contains the same *DrawingShape* class that is in **Chapter 13**, except that, following the recommendations described earlier in this chapter, the size field has been renamed as *\_size*, and the *locX* and *locY* fields have been renamed as *\_x* and *\_y*.

```

abstract class DrawingShape
{
    protected int _size;
    protected int x = 0, y = 0;
}

```

```
    ...  
}
```

4. Open the IDraw.cs file for the Drawing project in the Code and Text Editor window.

This interface specifies the *SetLocation* method, like this:

```
interface IDraw  
{  
    void SetLocation(int xCoord, in yCoord);  
    ...  
}
```

The purpose of this method is to set the *\_x* and *\_y* fields of the *DrawingShape* object to the values passed in. This method can be replaced with a pair of properties.

5. Delete this method and replace it with the definition of a pair of properties named *X* and *Y*, as shown here in bold:

```
interface IDraw  
{  
    int X { get; set; }  
    int Y { get; set; }  
    ...  
}
```

6. In the *DrawingShape* class, delete the *SetLocation* method and replace it with the following implementations of the *X* and *Y* properties:

```
public int X  
{  
    get { return this._x; }  
    set { this._x = value; }  
}  
public int Y  
{  
    get { return this._y; }  
    set { this._y = value; }  
}
```



7. Display the `DrawingPad.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window. If you are using Windows 8.1, find the *`drawingCanvas_Tapped`* method. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, find the *`drawingCanvas_MouseLeftButtonDown`* method.

These methods run when the user taps the screen or clicks the left mouse button, and they draw a square on the screen at the point where the user tapped or clicked.

8. Locate the statement that calls the *`SetLocation`* method to set the position of the square on the screen. It is located in the following *if* statement block, as highlighted in the following:

```
if (mySquare is IDraw)
{
    IDraw drawSquare = mySquare;
    drawSquare.SetLocation((int)mouseLocation.X, (int)mouseLocation.Y);
    drawSquare.Draw(drawingCanvas);
}
```

9. Replace this statement with code that sets the *X* and *Y* properties of the *Square* object, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
if (mySquare is IDraw)
{
    IDraw drawSquare = mySquare;
    drawSquare.X = (int)mouseLocation.X;
    drawSquare.Y = (int)mouseLocation.Y;
    drawSquare.Draw(drawingCanvas);
}
```

10. If you are using Windows 8.1, find the *`drawingCanvas_RightTapped`* method. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, find the *`drawingCanvas_MouseRightButtonDown`* method.

These methods run when the user taps and holds on the screen or clicks the right mouse button, and they draw a circle on the screen.

11. In this method, replace the statement that calls the *`SetLocation`* method of the *Circle* object and set the *X* and *Y* properties, instead, as shown in bold

in the following example:

```
if (myCircle is IDraw)
{
    IDraw drawCircle = myCircle;
    drawCircle.X = (int)mouseLocation.X;
    drawCircle.Y = (int)mouseLocation.Y;
    drawCircle.Draw(drawingCanvas);
}
```

12. Open the IColor.cs file for the Drawing project in the Code and Text Editor window. This interface specifies the *SetColor* method, like this:

```
interface IColor
{
    void SetColor(Color color);
}
```

13. Delete this method and replace it with the definition of a property named *Color*, as presented here:

```
interface IColor
{
    Color Color { set; }
}
```

This is a write-only property, providing a *set* accessor but no *get* accessor. This is because the color is not actually stored in the *DrawingShape* class and is only specified as each shape is drawn; you cannot actually query a shape to find out which color it is.

#### NOTE

It is common practice for a property to share the same name as a type (*Color* in this example).

14. Return to the *DrawingShape* class in the Code and Text Editor window. Replace the *SetColor* method in this class with the *Color* property shown here:

```

public Color Color
{
    set
    {
        if (this.shape != null)
        {
            SolidColorBrush brush = new SolidColorBrush(value);
            this.shape.Fill = brush;
        }
    }
}

```

#### TIP

The code for the *set* accessor is almost the same as the original *SetColor* method except that the statement that creates the *SolidColorBrush* object is passed the value parameter.

15. Return to the *DrawingPad.xaml.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window. In the *drawingCanvas\_Tapped* method (Windows 8.1) or *drawingCanvas\_MouseLeftButtonDown* method (Windows 7 or Windows 8), modify the statement that sets the color of the *Square* object to match the following code in bold:

```

if (mySquare is IColor)
{
    IColor colorSquare = mySquare;
    colorSquare.Color = Colors.BlueViolet;
}

```

16. Similarly, in the *drawingCanvas\_RightTapped* method (Windows 8.1) or *drawingCanvas\_MouseRightButtonDown* method (Windows 7 or Windows 8), modify the statement that sets the color of the *Circle* object.

```

if (myCircle is IColor)
{
    IColor colorCircle = myCircle;
    colorCircle.Color = Colors.HotPink;
}

```

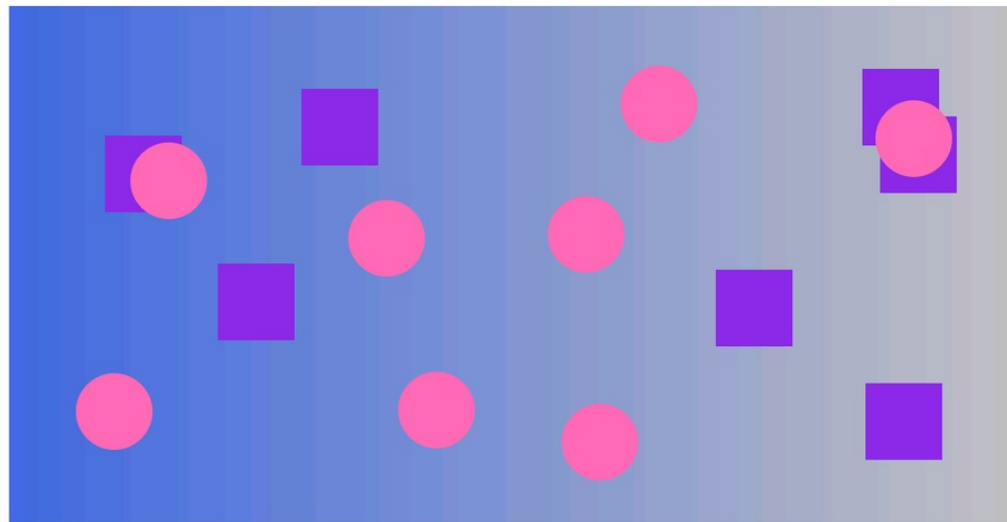
17. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the project.

18. Verify that the application operates in the same manner as before. If you tap the screen or click the left mouse button on the canvas, the application should draw a square, and if you tap and hold or click the right mouse button, the application should draw a circle. The following image shows the application running on Windows 8.1.

014 001

038 001

Drawing Pad



19. Return to the Visual Studio 2013 programming environment and stop debugging.

## Generating automatic properties

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the principal purpose of properties is to hide the implementation of fields from the outside world. This is fine if your properties actually perform some useful work, but if the *get* and *set* accessors simply wrap operations that just read or assign a value to a field, you might be questioning the value of this approach. However, there are at least two good reasons why you should define properties rather than exposing data as public fields even in these situations:

- **Compatibility with applications.** Fields and properties expose themselves by using different metadata in assemblies. If you develop a class and decide

to use public fields, any applications that use this class will reference these items as fields. Although you use the same C# syntax for reading and writing a field that you use when reading and writing a property, the compiled code is actually quite different—the C# compiler just hides the differences from you. If you later decide that you really do need to change these fields to properties (maybe the business requirements have changed, and you need to perform additional logic when assigning values), existing applications will not be able to use the updated version of the class without being recompiled. This is awkward if you have deployed the application on a large number of users' desktops throughout an organization. There are ways around this, but it is generally better to avoid getting into this situation in the first place.

- **Compatibility with interfaces.** If you are implementing an interface and the interface defines an item as a property, you must write a property that matches the specification in the interface, even if the property just reads and writes data in a private field. You cannot implement a property simply by exposing a public field with the same name.

The designers of the C# language recognized that programmers are busy people who should not have to waste their time writing more code than they need to. To this end, the C# compiler can generate the code for properties for you automatically, like this:

```
class Circle
{
    public int Radius{ get; set; }
    ...
}
```

In this example, the *Circle* class contains a property named *Radius*. Apart from the type of this property, you have not specified how this property works—the *get* and *set* accessors are empty. The C# compiler converts this definition to a private field and a default implementation that looks similar to this:

```
class Circle
{
    private int radius;
    public int Radius{
```

```

        get
        {
            return this.radius;
        }
        set
        {
            this._radius = value;
        }
    }
    ...
}

```

So, for very little effort, you can implement a simple property by using automatically generated code, and if you need to include additional logic later, you can do so without breaking any existing applications. You should note, however, that you must specify both a *get* and a *set* accessor with an automatically generated property—an automatic property cannot be read-only or write-only.

#### NOTE

The syntax for defining an automatic property is almost identical to the syntax for defining a property in an interface. The exception is that an automatic property can specify an access modifier, such as *private*, *public*, or *protected*.

With this approach, you can emulate read-only and write-only automatic properties by marking the *get* or *set* accessor as *private*. However, this approach is considered to be poor programming practice because it can introduce subtle bugs into your code. Therefore, I have elected not to show an example!

## Initializing objects by using properties

In [Chapter 7](#), you learned how to define constructors to initialize an object. An object can have multiple constructors, and you can define constructors with varying parameters to initialize different elements in an object. For example, you could define a class that models a triangle, like this:

```

public class Triangle
{
    private int side1Length;
    private int side2Length;
    . . .
}

```

```

private int side3Length;
// default constructor - default values for all sides
public Triangle()
{
    this.side1Length = this.side2Length = this.side3Length = 10;
}
// specify length for side1Length, default values for the others
public Triangle(int length1)
{
    this.side1Length = length1;
    this.side2Length = this.side3Length = 10;
}
// specify length for side1Length and side2Length,
// default value for side3Length
public Triangle(int length1, int length2)
{
    this.side1Length = length1;
    this.side2Length = length2;
    this.side3Length = 10;
}
// specify length for all sides
public Triangle(int length1, int length2, int length3)
{
    this.side1Length = length1;
    this.side2Length = length2;
    this.side3Length = length3;
}
}

```

Depending on how many fields a class contains and the various combinations you want to enable for initializing the fields, you could end up writing a lot of constructors. There are also potential problems if many of the fields have the same type: you might not be able to write a unique constructor for all combinations of fields. For example, in the preceding *Triangle* class, you could not easily add a constructor that initializes only the *side1Length* and *side3Length* fields because it would not have a unique signature; it would take two *int* parameters, and the constructor that initializes *side1Length* and *side2Length* already has this signature. One possible solution is to define a constructor that takes optional parameters and specify values for the parameters as named arguments when you create a *Triangle* object. However, a better and more transparent solution is to initialize the private fields to a set of default values and expose them as properties, like this:

When you create an instance of a class, you can initialize it by specifying the names and values for any public properties that have *set* accessors. For example, you can create *Triangle* objects and initialize any combination of the three sides, like this:

This syntax is known as an *object initializer*. When you invoke an object initializer in this way, the C# compiler generates code that calls the default constructor and then calls the *set* accessor of each named property to initialize it with the value specified. You can specify object initializers in combination with nondefault constructors, as well. For example, if the *Triangle* class also provided a constructor that took a single string parameter describing the type of triangle, you could invoke this constructor and initialize the other properties, like this:

[illegible]



The important point to remember is that the constructor runs first and the properties are set afterward. Understanding this sequencing is important if the constructor sets fields in an object to specific values and the properties that you specify change these values.

You can also use object initializers with automatic properties, as you will see in the next exercise. In this exercise, you will define a class for modeling regular polygons that contains automatic properties for providing access to information about the number of sides the polygon contains and the length of these sides.

Define automatic properties and use object initializers

1. In Visual Studio 2013, open the AutomaticProperties project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 15\Windows X\AutomaticProperties folder in your Documents folder.

The AutomaticProperties project contains the Program.cs file, defining the *Program* class with the *Main* and *doWork* methods that you saw in previous exercises.

2. In Solution Explorer, right-click the AutomaticProperties project, point to Add, and then click Class to open the Add New Item – AutomaticProperties dialog box. In the Name box type **Polygon.cs**, and then click Add.

The Polygon.cs file, holding the *Polygon* class, is created and added to the project and appears in the Code and Text Editor window.

3. Add the automatic properties *NumSides* and *SideLength*, shown here in bold to the *Polygon* class:

```
class Polygon
{
    public int NumSides { get; set; }
    public double SideLength { get; set; }
}
```

4. Add the following default constructor shown in bold to the *Polygon* class:

```
class Polygon
{
    ...
}
```

```

    public Polygon()
    {
        this.NumSides = 4;
        this.SideLength = 10.0;
    }
}

```

This constructor initializes the *NumSides* and *SideLength* fields with default values. In this exercise, the default polygon is a square with sides 10 units long.

5. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
6. Add the statements shown here in bold to the *doWork* method, replacing the *// TODO:* comment:

```

static void doWork()
{
    Polygon square = new Polygon();
    Polygon triangle = new Polygon { NumSides = 3 };
    Polygon pentagon = new Polygon { SideLength = 15.5, NumSides = 5 };
}

```

These statements create *Polygon* objects. The *square* variable is initialized by using the default constructor. The *triangle* and *pentagon* variables are also initialized by using the default constructor, and then this code changes the value of the properties exposed by the *Polygon* class. In the case of the *triangle* variable, the *NumSides* property is set to 3, but the *SideLength* property is left at its default value of 10.0. For the *pentagon* variable, the code changes the values of the *SideLength* and *NumSides* properties.

7. Add the following code shown in bold to the end of the *doWork* method:

```

static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Console.WriteLine("Square: number of sides is {0}, length of each side is {1}",
        square.NumSides, square.SideLength);
    Console.WriteLine("Triangle: number of sides is {0}, length of each side is {1}",

```

```

        triangle.NumSides, triangle.SideLength);
    Console.WriteLine("Pentagon: number of sides is {0}, length of each side
is {1}",
        pentagon.NumSides, pentagon.SideLength);
}

```

These statements display the values of the *NumSides* and *SideLength* properties for each *Polygon* object.

8. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Verify that the program builds and runs, writing the messages shown here to the console window:

```

C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
Square: number of sides is 4, length of each side is 10
Triangle: number of sides is 3, length of each side is 10
Pentagon: number of sides is 5, length of each side is 15.5
Press any key to continue . . .

```

- Press the Enter key to close the application and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to create and use properties to provide controlled access to data in an object. You also saw how to create automatic properties and how to use properties when initializing objects.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 16](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Declare a read/write property for a structure or class	Declare the type of the property, its name, a get accessor, and a set accessor. For example:

	<pre> struct ScreenPosition {     ...     public int X     {         get { ... }         set { ... }     }     ... } </pre>
Declare a read-only property for a structure or class	<p>Declare a property with only a get accessor. For example:</p> <pre> struct ScreenPosition {     ...     public int X     {         get { ... }     }     ... } </pre>
Declare a write-only property for a structure or class	<p>Declare a property with only a set accessor. For example:</p> <pre> struct ScreenPosition {     ...     public int X     {         set { ... }     }     ... } </pre>
Declare a property in an interface	<p>Declare a property with just the get or set keyword, or both. For example:</p> <pre> interface IScreenPosition {     int X { get; set; } // no body     int Y { get; set; } // no body } </pre>

	<pre> int Y { get; set; } // no body } </pre>
Implement an interface property in a structure or class	<p>In the class or structure that implements the interface, declare the property and implement the accessors. For example:</p> <pre> struct ScreenPosition : IScreenPosition {     public int X     {         get { ... }         set { ... }     }     public int Y     {         get { ... }         set { ... }     } } </pre>
Create an automatic property	<p>In the class or structure that contains the property, define the property with empty get and set accessors. For example:</p> <pre> class Polygon {     public int NumSides { get; set; } } </pre>
Use properties to initialize an object	<p>Specify the properties and their values as a list enclosed in braces when constructing the object. For example:</p> <pre> Triangle tri3 =     new Triangle { Side2Length = 12, Side3Length = 17 }; </pre>

# Chapter 16. Using indexers

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **What is an indexer?**
- Control read access to indexers by declaring *get* accessors.
- Control write access to indexers by declaring *set* accessors.
- **Indexers in interfaces**
- Implement indexers in structures and classes that inherit from interfaces.

**Chapter 15** describes how to implement and use properties as a means of providing controlled access to the fields in a class. Properties are useful for mirroring fields that contain a single value. However, indexers are invaluable if you want to provide access to items that contain multiple values by using a natural and familiar syntax.

## What is an indexer?

You can think of an *indexer* as a smart array in much the same way that you can think of a property as a smart field. Whereas a property encapsulates a single value in a class, an indexer encapsulates a set of values. The syntax that you use for an indexer is exactly the same as the syntax that you use for an array.

The best way to understand indexers is to work through an example. First, you'll consider a problem and examine a solution that doesn't use indexers. Then, you'll work through the same problem and look at a better solution that does use indexers. The problem concerns integers, or more precisely, the *int* type.

## An example that doesn't use indexers

You normally use an *int* to hold an integer value. Internally, an *int* stores its value as a sequence of 32 bits, where each bit can be either 0 or 1. Most of the time, you don't care about this internal binary representation; you just use an *int* type as a container that holds an integer value. However, sometimes programmers use the *int* type for other purposes—some programs use an *int* as a set of binary flags and manipulate the individual bits within an *int*. If you are an old C hack like I am, what follows should have a very familiar feel!

#### NOTE

Some older programs used *int* types in an effort to save memory. Such programs typically date back to when the size of computer memory was measured in kilobytes rather than the gigabytes available these days, and memory was at an absolute premium. A single *int* holds 32 bits, each of which can be 1 or 0. In some cases, programmers assigned 1 to indicate the value *true* and 0 to indicate *false*, and then employed an *int* as a set of Boolean values.

C# provides a set of operators that you can use to access and manipulate the individual bits in an *int*. These operators are as follows:

- **The NOT (~) operator.** This is a unary operator that performs a bitwise complement. For example, if you take the 8-bit value *11001100* (204 decimal) and apply the ~ operator to it, you obtain the result *00110011* (51 decimal)—all the 1s in the original value become 0s, and all the 0s become 1s.

#### NOTE

The examples shown here are purely illustrative and are accurate only to 8 bits. In C#, the *int* type is 32 bits, so if you try any these examples in a C# application, you will get a 32-bit result that might be different from those shown in this list. For example, in 32 bits, 204 is 00000000000000000000000011001100, so in C#, ~204 is 11111111111111111111111100110011 (which is actually the *int* representation of -205 in C#).

- **The left-shift (<<) operator.** This is a binary operator that performs a left shift. The expression *204 << 2* returns the value 48. (In binary, 204 decimal is *11001100*, and left-shifting it by two places yields *00110000*, or 48 decimal.) The far-left bits are discarded, and zeros are introduced from the

right. There is a corresponding right-shift operator, `>>`.

- **The OR (`|`) operator.** This is a binary operator that performs a bitwise OR operation, returning a value containing a 1 in each position in which either of the operands has a 1. For example, the expression `204 | 24` has the value 220 (204 is 11001100, 24 is 00011000, and 220 is 11011100).
- **The AND (`&`) operator.** This operator performs a bitwise AND operation. AND is similar to the bitwise OR operator, except that it returns a value containing a 1 in each position where both of the operands have a 1. So, `204 & 24` is 8 (204 is 11001100, 24 is 00011000, and 8 is 00001000).
- **The XOR (`^`) operator.** This operator performs a bitwise exclusive OR operation, returning a 1 in each bit where there is a 1 in one operand or the other but not both. (Two 1s yield a 0—this is the “exclusive” part of the operator.) So `204 ^ 24` is 212 (11001100 ^ 00011000 is 11010100).

You can use these operators together to determine the values of the individual bits in an *int*. As an example, the following expression uses the left-shift (`<<`) and bitwise AND (`&`) operators to determine whether the sixth bit from the right of the *byte* variable named *bits* is set to 0 or to 1:

```
(bits & (1 << 5)) != 0
```

#### NOTE

The bitwise operators count the positions of bits from right to left, and the bits are numbered starting at 0. So, bit 0 is the rightmost bit, and the bit at position 5 is the bit six places from the right.

Suppose that the *bits* variable contains the decimal value 42. In binary, this is 00101010. The decimal value 1 is 00000001 in binary, and the expression `1 << 5` has the value 00100000; the sixth bit is 1. In binary, the expression `bits & (1 << 5)` is `00101010 & 00100000`, and the value of this expression is binary 00100000, which is nonzero. If the variable *bits* contains the value 65, or 01000001 in binary, the value of the expression is `01000001 & 00100000`, which yields the binary result 00000000, or zero.



This is a fairly complicated example, but it's trivial in comparison to the following expression, which uses the compound assignment operator `&=` to set the bit at position 6 to 0:

```
bits &= ~(1 << 5)
```

Similarly, if you want to set the bit at position 6 to 1, you can use a bitwise OR (`|`) operator. The following complicated expression is based on the compound assignment operator `|=`:

```
bits |= (1 << 5)
```

The trouble with these examples is that although they work, they are fiendishly difficult to understand. They're complicated, and the solution is a very low-level one: it fails to create an abstraction of the problem that it solves, and it is consequently very difficult to maintain code that performs these kinds of operations.

## The same example using indexers

Let's pull back from the preceding low-level solution for a moment for a reminder of what the problem is. You'd like to use an *int* not as an *int* but as an array of bits. Therefore, the best way to solve this problem is to use an *int* as if it were an array of bits; in other words, what you'd like to be able to write to access the bit 6 places from the right in the *bits* variable is an expression such as the following (remember that arrays start with index 0):

```
bits[5]
```

And, to set the bit 4 places from the right to *true*, we'd like to be able to write this:

```
bits[3] = true
```

### NOTE

To seasoned C developers, the Boolean value *true* is synonymous with the binary value 1, and

the Boolean value *false* is synonymous with the binary value 0. Consequently, the expression *bits[3] = true* means “Set the bit 4 places from the right of the *bits* variable to 1.”

Unfortunately, you can’t use the square bracket notation on an *int*; it works only on an array or on a type that behaves like an array. So, the solution to the problem is to create a new type that acts like, feels like, and is used like an array of *bool* variables but is implemented by using an *int*. You can achieve this feat by defining an indexer. Let’s call this new type *IntBits*. *IntBits* will contain an *int* value (initialized in its constructor), but the idea is that you’ll use *IntBits* as an array of *bool* variables.

#### TIP

The *IntBits* type is small and lightweight, so it makes sense to create it as a structure rather than as a class.

```
struct IntBits
{
    private int bits;
    public IntBits(int initialBitValue)
    {
        bits = initialBitValue;
    }
    // indexer to be written here
}
```

To define the indexer, you use a notation that is a cross between a property and an array. You introduce the indexer with the *this* keyword, specify the type of the value returned by the indexer, and also specify the type of the value to use as the index into the indexer between square brackets. The indexer for the *IntBits* struct uses an integer as its index type and returns a Boolean value. It looks like this:

```
struct IntBits
{
    ...
    public bool this [ int index ]
    {
        get
    }
}
```

```

    ~
{
    return (bits & (1 << index)) != 0;
}
set
{
    if (value) // turn the bit on if value is true; otherwise, turn it off
        bits |= (1 << index);
    else
        bits &= ~(1 << index);
}
}
}

```

Notice the following points:

- An indexer is not a method; there are no parentheses containing a parameter, but there are square brackets that specify an index. This index is used to specify which element is being accessed.
- All indexers use the *this* keyword. A class or structure can define at most one indexer (although you can overload it and have several implementations), and it is always named *this*.
- Indexers contain *get* and *set* accessors just like properties. In this example, the *get* and *set* accessors contain the complicated bitwise expressions previously discussed.
- The index specified in the indexer declaration is populated with the index value specified when the indexer is called. The *get* and *set* accessor methods can read this argument to determine which element should be accessed.

#### NOTE

You should perform a range check on the index value in the indexer to prevent any unexpected exceptions from occurring in your indexer code.

After you have declared the indexer, you can use a variable of type *IntBits* instead of an *int* and apply the square bracket notation, as shown in the next example:

```

int adapted = 126;    // 126 has the binary representation 01111110
IntBits bits = new IntBits(adapted);
bool peek = bits[6]; // retrieve bool at index 6; should be true (1)
bits[0] = true;      // set the bit at index 0 to true (1)
bits[3] = false;     // set the bit at index 3 to false (0)
                    // the value in bits is now 01110111, or 119 in decimal

```

This syntax is certainly much easier to understand. It directly and succinctly captures the essence of the problem.

## Understanding indexer accessors

When you read an indexer, the compiler automatically translates your array-like code into a call to the *get* accessor of that indexer. Consider the following example:

```
bool peek = bits[6];
```

This statement is converted to a call to the *get* accessor for *bits*, and the *index* argument is set to 6.

Similarly, if you write to an indexer, the compiler automatically translates your array-like code into a call to the *set* accessor of that indexer, setting the *index* argument to the value enclosed in the square brackets, such as illustrated here:

```
bits[3] = true;
```

This statement is converted to a call to the *set* accessor for *bits* where *index* is 3. As with ordinary properties, the data you are writing to the indexer (in this case, *true*) is made available inside the *set* accessor by using the *value* keyword. The type of *value* is the same as the type of indexer itself (in this case, *bool*).

It's also possible to use an indexer in a combined read/write context. In this case, the *get* and *set* accessors are both used. Look at the following statement, which uses the XOR operator (^) to invert the value of the bit at index 6 in the *bits* variable:

```
bits[6] ^= true;
```

This code is automatically translated into the following:

```
bits[6] = bits[6] ^ true;
```

This code works because the indexer declares both a *get* and a *set* accessor.

#### NOTE

You can declare an indexer that contains only a *get* accessor (a read-only indexer) or only a *set* accessor (a write-only accessor).

## Comparing indexers and arrays

When you use an indexer, the syntax is deliberately array-like. However, there are some important differences between indexers and arrays:

- Indexers can use non-numeric subscripts, such as a string as shown in the following example, whereas arrays can use only integer subscripts.

```
public int this [ string name ] { ... } // OK
```

- Indexers can be overloaded (just like methods), whereas arrays cannot.

```
public Name this [ PhoneNumber number ] { ... }  
public PhoneNumber this [ Name name ] { ... }
```

- Indexers cannot be used as *ref* or *out* parameters, whereas array elements can.

```
IntBits bits;           // bits contains an indexer  
Method(ref bits[1]);    // compile-time error
```

**PROPERTIES, ARRAYS, AND INDEXERS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A PROPERTY TO RETURN AN ARRAY, BUT REMEMBER THAT ARRAYS ARE REFERENCE TYPES, SO EXPOSING AN ARRAY AS A PROPERTY MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO ACCIDENTALLY OVERWRITE A LOT OF DATA. LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING STRUCTURE THAT EXPOSES AN ARRAY PROPERTY NAMED *DATA*:**

```
STRUCT WRAPPER  
{  
    PRIVATE INT[] DATA;
```

```

    ...
    PUBLIC INT[] DATA
    {
        GET { RETURN THIS.DATA; }
        SET { THIS.DATA = VALUE; }
    }
}

```

**NOW, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING CODE THAT USES THIS PROPERTY:**

```

WRAPPER WRAP = NEW WRAPPER();
...
INT[] MYDATA = WRAP.DATA;
MYDATA[0]++;
MYDATA[1]++;

```

**THIS LOOKS PRETTY INNOCUOUS. HOWEVER, BECAUSE ARRAYS ARE REFERENCE TYPES, THE VARIABLE *MYDATA* REFERS TO THE SAME OBJECT AS THE PRIVATE *DATA* VARIABLE IN THE *WRAPPER* STRUCTURE. ANY CHANGES YOU MAKE TO ELEMENTS IN *MYDATA* ARE MADE TO THE *DATA* ARRAY; THE EXPRESSION *MYDATA[0]++* HAS EXACTLY THE SAME EFFECT AS *DATA[0]++*. IF THIS IS NOT THE INTENTION, YOU SHOULD USE THE *CLONE* METHOD IN THE *GET* AND *SET* ACCESSORS OF THE *DATA* PROPERTY TO RETURN A COPY OF THE DATA ARRAY, OR MAKE A COPY OF THE VALUE BEING SET, AS SHOWN IN THE CODE THAT FOLLOWS. (CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSES THE *CLONE* METHOD FOR COPYING ARRAYS.) NOTICE THAT THE *CLONE* METHOD RETURNS AN OBJECT, WHICH YOU MUST CAST TO AN INTEGER ARRAY.**

```

STRUCT WRAPPER
{
    PRIVATE INT[] DATA;
    ...
    PUBLIC INT[] DATA
    {
        GET { RETURN THIS.DATA.CLONE() AS INT[]; }
        SET { THIS.DATA = VALUE.CLONE() AS INT[]; }
    }
}

```

**HOWEVER, THIS APPROACH CAN BECOME VERY MESSY AND EXPENSIVE IN TERMS OF MEMORY USE. INDEXERS PROVIDE A NATURAL SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM—DON'T EXPOSE THE ENTIRE ARRAY AS A PROPERTY; JUST MAKE ITS INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS AVAILABLE THROUGH AN INDEXER:**

```

STRUCT WRAPPER

```

```

    {
        PRIVATE INT[] DATA;
        ...
        PUBLIC INT THIS [INT I]
        {
            GET { RETURN THIS.DATA[I]; }
            SET { THIS.DATA[I] = VALUE; }
        }
    }

```

**THE FOLLOWING CODE USES THE INDEXER IN A SIMILAR MANNER TO THE PROPERTY SHOWN EARLIER:**

```

WRAPPER WRAP = NEW WRAPPER();
...
INT[] MYDATA = NEW INT[2];
MYDATA[0] = WRAP[0];
MYDATA[1] = WRAP[1];
MYDATA[0]++;
MYDATA[1]++;

```

**THIS TIME, INCREMENTING THE VALUES IN THE *MYDATA* ARRAY HAS NO EFFECT ON THE ORIGINAL ARRAY IN THE *WRAPPER* OBJECT. IF YOU REALLY WANT TO MODIFY THE DATA IN THE *WRAPPER* OBJECT, YOU MUST WRITE STATEMENTS SUCH AS THIS:**

```
WRAP[0]++;
```

**THIS IS MUCH CLEARER AND SAFER!**

## Indexers in interfaces

You can declare indexers in an interface. To do this, specify the *get* keyword, the *set* keyword, or both, but replace the body of the *get* or *set* accessor with a semicolon. Any class or structure that implements the interface must implement the *indexer* accessors declared in the interface, as demonstrated here:

```

interface IRawInt
{
    bool this [ int index ] { get; set; }
}
struct RawInt : IRawInt

```

```

{
    ...
    public bool this [ int index ]
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    ...
}

```

If you implement the interface `indexer` in a class, you can declare the indexer implementations as *virtual*. This allows further derived classes to override the *get* and *set* accessors, such as in the following:

```

class RawInt : IRawInt
{
    ...
    public virtual bool this [ int index ]
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    ...
}

```

You can also choose to implement an indexer by using the explicit interface implementation syntax covered in [Chapter 13](#). An explicit implementation of an indexer is nonpublic and nonvirtual (and so cannot be overridden), as shown in this example:

```

struct RawInt : IRawInt
{
    ...
    bool IRawInt.this [ int index ]
    {
        get { ... }
        set { ... }
    }
    ...
}

```

## Using indexers in a Windows application



In the following exercise, you will examine a simple phone book application and complete its implementation. You will write two indexers in the *PhoneBook* class: one that accepts a *Name* parameter and returns a *PhoneNumber*, and another that accepts a *PhoneNumber* parameter and returns a *Name*. (The *Name* and *PhoneNumber* structures have already been written.) You will also need to call these indexers from the correct places in the program.

Familiarize yourself with the application

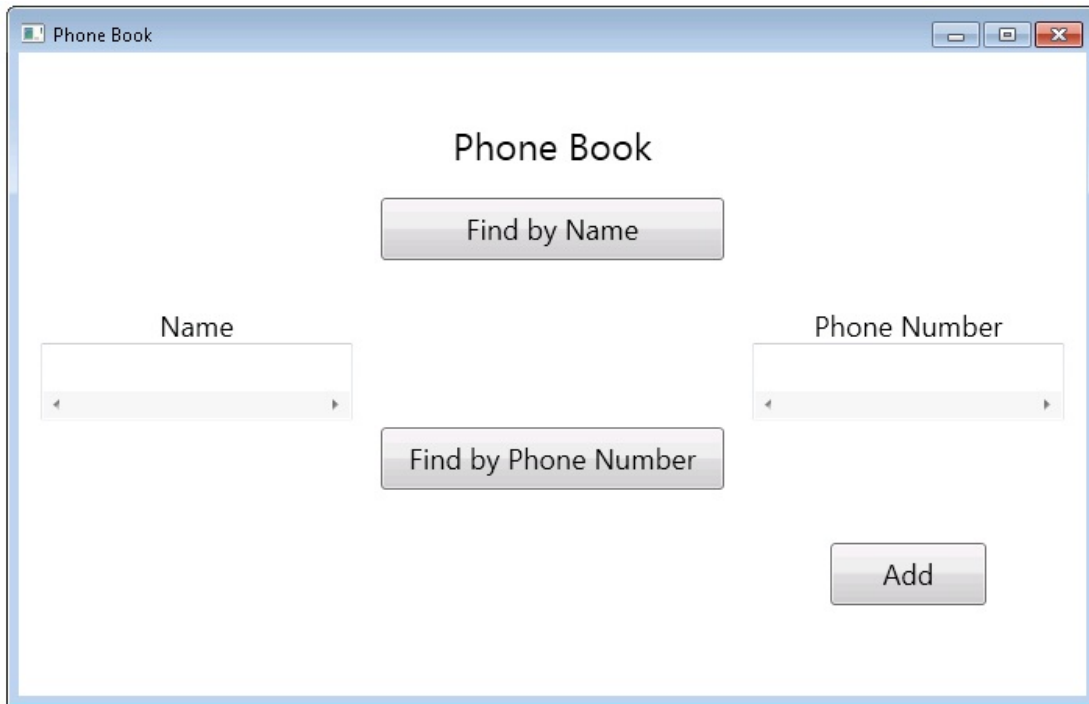
1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Indexers project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 16\Windows X\Indexers folder in your Documents folder.

With this graphical application, a user can search for the telephone number for a contact and also find the name of a contact that matches a given telephone number.

3. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

The project builds and runs. A form appears, displaying two empty text boxes labeled Name and Phone Number. The form also contains three buttons: one to add a name/phone number pair to a list of names and phone numbers held by the application, one to find a phone number when given a name, and one to find a name when given a phone number. These buttons currently do nothing.

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, the application looks like this:



If you are using Windows 8.1, the Add button is located on the app bar rather than on the main form. Remember that in a Windows Store app you can show the app bar by right-clicking in the form displaying the application.

001 001

064 001

## Phone Book

Find by Name

Name

Phone Number

Find by Phone Number



Your task is to complete the application so that the buttons work.

- Return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging.
- Display the *Name.cs* file for the Indexers project in the Code and Text Editor window. Examine the *Name* structure. Its purpose is to act as a holder for names.

The name is provided as a string to the constructor. The name can be retrieved by using the read-only string property named *Text*. (The *Equals* and *GetHashCode* methods are used for comparing *Names* when searching through an array of *Name* values—you can ignore them for now.)

- Display the *PhoneNumber.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window, and examine the *PhoneNumber* structure. It is similar to the *Name* structure.
- Display the *PhoneBook.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window, and examine the *PhoneBook* class.

This class contains two private arrays: an array of *Name* values called *names*, and an array of *PhoneNumber* values called *phoneNumbers*. The *PhoneBook* class also contains an *Add* method that adds a phone number and name to the phone book. This method is called when the user clicks the *Add* button on the form. The *enlargeIfFull* method is called by *Add* to check whether the arrays are full when the user adds another entry. This method creates two new bigger arrays, copies the contents of the existing arrays to them, and then discards the old arrays.

The *Add* method is deliberately kept simple and does not check whether a name or phone number has already been added to the phone book.

The *PhoneBook* class does not currently provide any functionality with which a user can find a name or telephone number; you will add two indexers to provide this facility in the next exercise.

Write the indexers

1. In the *PhoneBook.cs* file, delete the comment *// TODO: write 1st indexer here* and replace it with a *public* read-only indexer for the *PhoneBook* class, as shown in bold in the code that follows. The indexer should return a *Name* and take a *PhoneNumber* item as its index. Leave the body of the *get* accessor blank.

The indexer should look like this:

```
sealed class PhoneBook
```

```

{
    ...
    public Name this[PhoneNumber number]
    {
        get
        {
        }
    }
    ...
}

```

2. Implement the *get* accessor as shown in bold in the code that follows.

The purpose of the accessor is to find the name that matches the specified phone number. To do this, you need to call the static *IndexOf* method of the *Array* class. The *IndexOf* method performs a search through an array, returning the index of the first item in the array that matches the specified value. The first argument to *IndexOf* is the array to search through (*phoneNumbers*). The second argument to *IndexOf* is the item for which you are searching. *IndexOf* returns the integer index of the element if it finds it; otherwise, *IndexOf* returns *-1*. If the indexer finds the phone number, it should return the corresponding name, otherwise, it should return an empty *Name* value. (Note that *Name* is a structure, so the default constructor sets its private *name* field to *null*.)

```

sealed class PhoneBook
{
    ...
    public Name this [PhoneNumber number]
    {
        get
        {
            int i = Array.IndexOf(this.phoneNumbers, number);
            if (i != -1)
            {
                return this.names[i];
            }
            else
            {
                return new Name();
            }
        }
    }
}

```

```
    ...  
}
```

3. Remove the comment *// TODO: write 2nd indexer here* and replace it with a second *public* read-only indexer for the *PhoneBook* class that returns a *PhoneNumber* and accepts a single *Name* parameter. Implement this indexer in the same way as the first one. (Again, note that *PhoneNumber* is a structure and therefore always has a default constructor.) The second indexer should look like this:

```
sealed class PhoneBook  
{  
    ...  
    public PhoneNumber this [Name name]  
    {  
        get  
        {  
            int i = Array.IndexOf(this.names, name);  
            if (i != -1)  
            {  
                return this.phoneNumbers[i];  
            }  
            else  
            {  
                return new PhoneNumber();  
            }  
        }  
    }  
    ...  
}
```

Notice that these overloaded indexers can coexist because the values that they index are of different types, which means that their signatures are different. If the *Name* and *PhoneNumber* structures were replaced by simple strings (which they wrap), the overloads would have the same signature and the class would not compile.

4. On the Build menu, click Build Solution, correct any syntax errors, and then rebuild if necessary.

Call the indexers

1. Display the `MainWindow.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window, and then locate the *findByNameClick* method.

This method is called when the Find By Name button is clicked. This method is currently empty. Replace the *// TODO:* comment with the code shown in bold in the example that follows. This code performs these tasks:

- a. Read the value of the *Text* property from the *name* text box on the form. This is a string containing the contact name that the user has typed in.
- b. If the string is not empty, search for the phone number corresponding to that name in the *PhoneBook* by using the indexer. (Notice that the *MainWindow* class contains a private *PhoneBook* field named *phoneBook*.) Construct a *Name* object from the string, and pass it as the parameter to the *PhoneBook* indexer.
- c. If the *Text* property of the *PhoneNumber* structure returned by the indexer is not *null* or empty, write the value of this property to the *phoneNumber* text box on the form; otherwise, display the text “Not Found”.

The completed *findByNameClick* method should look like this:

```
private void findByNameClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    string text = name.Text;
    if (!String.IsNullOrEmpty(text))
    {
        Name personsName = new Name(text);
        PhoneNumber personsPhoneNumber = this.phoneBook[personsName];
        phoneNumber.Text = String.IsNullOrEmpty(personsPhoneNumber.Text)
        ?
        "Not Found" : personsPhoneNumber.Text;
    }
}
```

Other than the statement that accesses the indexer, there are two further points of interest in this code:

- d. The static *String* method *IsEmpty* is used to determine whether

a string is empty or contains a *null* value. This is the preferred method for testing whether a string contains a value. It returns *true* if the string contains a null value or it is the empty string; otherwise, it returns *false*.

- e. The `? :` operator used by the statement that populates the *Text* property of the *phoneNumber* text box on the form acts like an inline *if...else* statement for an expression. It is a ternary operator that takes the following three operands: a Boolean expression, an expression to evaluate and return if the Boolean expression is true, and another expression to evaluate and return if the Boolean expression is false. In the preceding code, if the expression *String.IsNullOrEmpty(personsPhoneNumber.Text)* is true, no matching entry was found in the phone book and the text “Not Found” displays on the form; otherwise, the value held in the *Text* property of the *personsPhoneNumber* variable is displayed.

The general form of the `? :` operator is as follows:

```
Result = <Boolean Expression> ? <Evaluate if true> : <Evaluate if false>
```

- Locate the *findByPhoneNumberClick* method in the *MainWindow.xaml.cs* file. It is below the *findByNameClick* method.

The *findByPhoneNumberClick* method is called when the Find By Phone Number button is clicked. This method is currently empty apart from a *// TODO:* comment. You need to implement it as follows (the completed code is shown in bold in the example that follows):

1. Read the value of the *Text* property from the *phoneNumber* box on the form. This is a string containing the phone number that the user has typed.
2. If the string is not empty, search for the name corresponding to that phone number in the *PhoneBook* by using the indexer.
3. Write the *Text* property of the *Name* structure returned by the indexer to the *name* box on the form.

The completed method should look like this:

```

private void findByPhoneNumberClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    string text = phoneNumber.Text;
    if (!String.IsNullOrEmpty(text))
    {
        PhoneNumber personsPhoneNumber = new PhoneNumber(text);
        Name personsName = this.phoneBook[personsPhoneNumber];
        name.Text = String.IsNullOrEmpty(personsName.Text) ?
            "Not Found" : personsName.Text;
    }
}

```

- On the Build menu, click Build Solution, and then correct any errors that occur.

Test the application

1. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
2. Type your name and phone number in the appropriate boxes, and then click Add. (If you are running Windows 8.1, remember that the Add button is on the app bar.) When you click the Add button, the *Add* method stores the information in the phone book and clears the text boxes so that they are ready to perform a search.
3. Repeat step 2 several times with some different names and phone numbers so that the phone book contains a selection of entries. Note that the application performs no checking of the names and telephone numbers that you enter, and you can input the same name and telephone number more than once. For the purposes of this demonstration, to avoid confusion, ensure that you provide different names and telephone numbers.
4. Type a name that you used in step 3 into the Name box, and then click Find By Name.

The phone number you added for this contact in step 3 is retrieved from the phone book and is displayed in the Phone Number text box.

5. Type a phone number for a different contact in the Phone Number box, and then click Find By Phone Number.

The contact name is retrieved from the phone book and is displayed in the Name box



NAME BOX.

6. Type a name that you did not enter in the phone book into the Name box, and then click Find By Name.

This time, the Phone Number box displays the message “Not Found”.

7. Close the form, and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to use indexers to provide array-like access to data in a class. You learned how to create indexers that can take an index and return the corresponding value by using logic defined by the *get* accessor, and you saw how to use the *set* accessor with an index to populate a value in an indexer.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 17](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Create an indexer for a class or structure	<p>Declare the type of the indexer, followed by the keyword <i>this</i>, and then the indexer arguments in square brackets. The body of the indexer can contain a <i>get</i> and/or <i>set</i> accessor. For example:</p> <pre>struct RawInt {     ...     public bool this [ int index ]     {         get { ... }         set { ... }     }     ... }</pre>

Define an indexer in an interface	<p>Define an indexer with the <i>get</i> and/or <i>set</i> keywords. For example:</p> <pre> interface IRawInt {     bool this [ int index ] { get; set; } } </pre>
Implement an interface indexer in a class or structure	<p>In the class or structure that implements the interface, define the indexer and implement the accessors. For example:</p> <pre> struct RawInt : IRawInt {     ...     public bool this [ int index ]     {         get { ... }         set { ... }     }     ... } </pre>
Implement an indexer defined by an interface by using explicit interface implementation in a class or structure	<p>In the class or structure that implements the interface, specify the interface, but do not specify the indexer accessibility. For example:</p> <pre> struct RawInt : IRawInt {     ...     bool IRawInt.this [ int index ]     {         get { ... }         set { ... }     }     ... } </pre>

# Chapter 17. Introducing generics

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **The generics solution**
- Define a type-safe class by using generics.
- **Creating a generic class**
- Implement a generic interface.
- **Defining a generic method to build a binary tree**

**Chapter 8** shows you how to use the *object* type to refer to an instance of any class. You can use the *object* type to store a value of any type, and you can define parameters by using the *object* type when you need to pass values of any type into a method. A method can also return values of any type by specifying *object* as the return type. Although this practice is very flexible, it puts the onus on the programmer to remember what sort of data is actually being used. This can lead to runtime errors if the programmer makes a mistake. In this chapter, you will learn about generics, a feature that has been designed to help you prevent this kind of mistake.

## The problem with the *object* type

To understand generics, it is worth looking in detail at the problem for which they are designed to solve.

Suppose that you needed to model a first-in, first-out structure such as a queue. You could create a class such as the following:

```
class Queue
{
    private const int DEFAULTQUEUESIZE = 100;
```

```

private int[] data;
private int head = 0, tail = 0;
private int numElements = 0;
public Queue()
{
    this.data = new int[DEFAULTQUEUESIZE];
}
public Queue(int size)
{
    if (size > 0)
    {
        this.data = new int[size];
    }
    else
    {
        throw new ArgumentOutOfRangeException("size", "Must be greater than
zero");
    }
}
public void Enqueue(int item)
{
    if (this.numElements == this.data.Length)
    {
        throw new Exception("Queue full");
    }
    this.data[this.head] = item;
    this.head++;
    this.head %= this.data.Length;
    this.numElements++;
}
public int Dequeue()
{
    if (this.numElements == 0)
    {
        throw new Exception("Queue empty");
    }
    int queueItem = this.data[this.tail];
    this.tail++;
    this.tail %= this.data.Length;
    this.numElements--;
    return queueItem;
}
}

```

This class uses an array to provide a circular buffer for holding the data. The size of this array is specified by the constructor. An application uses the *Enqueue*

method to add an item to the queue and the *Dequeue* method to pull an item off the queue. The private *head* and *tail* fields keep track of where to insert an item into the array and where to retrieve an item from the array. The *numElements* field indicates how many items are in the array. The *Enqueue* and *Dequeue* methods use these fields to determine where to store or retrieve an item from and perform some rudimentary error checking. An application can create a *Queue* object and call these methods, as shown in the code example that follows. Notice that the items are dequeued in the same order in which they are enqueued:

```
Queue queue = new Queue(); // Create a new Queue
queue.Enqueue(100);
queue.Enqueue(-25);
queue.Enqueue(33);
Console.WriteLine("{0}", queue.Dequeue()); // Displays 100
Console.WriteLine("{0}", queue.Dequeue()); // Displays -25
Console.WriteLine("{0}", queue.Dequeue()); // Displays 33
```

Now, the *Queue* class works well for queues of *ints*, but what if you want to create queues of strings, or floats, or even queues of more complex types such as *Circle* (see [Chapter 7](#)), or *Horse*, or *Whale* (see [Chapter 12](#))? The problem is that the way in which the *Queue* class is implemented restricts it to items of type *int*, and if you try to enqueue a *Horse*, you will get a compile-time error.

```
Queue queue = new Queue();
Horse myHorse = new Horse();
queue.Enqueue(myHorse); // Compile-time error: Cannot convert from Horse to int
```

One way around this restriction is to specify that the array in the *Queue* class contains items of type *object*, update the constructors, and modify the *Enqueue* and *Dequeue* methods to take an object parameter and return an object, such as in the following:

```
class Queue
{
    ...
    private object[] data;
    ...
    public Queue()
    {
        this.data = new object[DEFAULTQUEUESIZE];
    }
}
```

```

    }
    public Queue(int size)
    {
        ...
        this.data = new object[size];
        ...
    }
    public void Enqueue(object item)
    {
        ...
    }
    public object Dequeue()
    {
        ...
        object queueItem = this.data[this.tail];
        ...
        return queueItem;
    }
}

```

Remember that you can use the *object* type to refer to a value or variable of any type. All reference types automatically inherit (either directly or indirectly) from the *System.Object* class in the Microsoft .NET Framework (in C#, *object* is an alias for *System.Object*). Now, because the *Enqueue* and *Dequeue* methods manipulate *objects*, you can operate on queues of *Circles*, *Horses*, *Whales*, or any of the other classes that you have seen in earlier exercises in this book. However, it is important to notice that you have to cast the value returned by the *Dequeue* method to the appropriate type because the compiler will not perform the conversion from the *object* type automatically.

```

Queue queue = new Queue();
Horse myHorse = new Horse();
queue.Enqueue(myHorse); // Now legal - Horse is an object
...
Horse dequeuedHorse =(Horse)queue.Dequeue(); // Need to cast object back to a Horse

```

If you don't cast the returned value, you will get the compiler error "Cannot implicitly convert type 'object' to 'Horse.'" This requirement to perform an explicit cast degenerates much of the flexibility afforded by the *object* type. Furthermore, it is very easy to write code such as this:

```

Queue queue = new Queue();
..      ..      ..      ..

```

```
Horse myHorse = new Horse();
queue.Enqueue(myHorse);
...
Circle myCircle = (Circle)queue.Dequeue(); // runtime error
```

Although this code will compile, it is not valid and throws a *System.InvalidCastException* exception at run time. The error is caused by trying to store a reference to a *Horse* in a *Circle* variable when it is dequeued, and the two types are not compatible. This error is not spotted until run time because the compiler does not have enough information to perform this check at compile time. The real type of the object being dequeued becomes apparent only when the code runs.

Another disadvantage of using the *object* approach to create generalized classes and methods is that it can consume additional memory and processor time if the runtime needs to convert an *object* to a value type and back again. Consider the following piece of code that manipulates a queue of *int* values:

```
Queue queue = new Queue();
int myInt = 99;
queue.Enqueue(myInt);           // box the int to an object
...
myInt = (int)queue.Dequeue(); // unbox the object to an int
```

The *Queue* data type expects the items it holds to be objects, and *object* is a reference type. Enqueueing a value type, such as an *int*, requires it to be boxed to convert it to a reference type. Similarly, dequeuing into an *int* requires the item to be unboxed to convert it back to a value type. See the sections **Boxing** and **Unboxing** in **Chapter 8** for more details. Although boxing and unboxing happen transparently, they add performance overhead because they involve dynamic memory allocations. This overhead is small for each item, but it adds up when a program creates queues of large numbers of value types.

## The generics solution

C# provides generics to remove the need for casting, improve type safety, reduce the amount of boxing required, and make it easier to create generalized classes and methods. Generic classes and methods accept *type parameters*, which

specify the types of objects on which they operate. In C#, you indicate that a class is a generic class by providing a type parameter in angle brackets, like this:

```
class Queue<T>
{
    ...
}
```

The *T* in this example acts as a placeholder for a real type at compile time. When you write code to instantiate a generic *Queue*, you provide the type that should be substituted for *T* (*Circle*, *Horse*, *int*, and so on). When you define the fields and methods in the class, you use this same placeholder to indicate the type of these items, like this:

```
class Queue<T>
{
    ...
    private T[] data; // array is of type 'T' where 'T' is the type parameter
    ...
    public Queue()
    {
        this.data = new T[DEFAULTQUEUESIZE]; // use 'T' as the data type
    }
    public Queue(int size)
    {
        ...
        this.data = new T[size];
        ...
    }
    public void Enqueue(T item) // use 'T' as the type of the method parameter
    {
        ...
    }
    public T Dequeue() // use 'T' as the type of the return value
    {
        ...
        T queueItem = this.data[this.tail]; // the data in the array is of type 'T'
        ...
        return queueItem;
    }
}
```

The type parameter *T* can be any legal C# identifier, although the lone character



$T$  is commonly used. It is replaced with the type you specify when you create a *Queue* object. The following examples create a *Queue* of *ints*, and a *Queue* of *Horses*:

```
Queue<int> intQueue = new Queue<int>();
Queue<Horse> horseQueue = new Queue<Horse>();
```

Additionally, the compiler now has enough information to perform strict type-checking when you build the application. You no longer need to cast data when you call the *Dequeue* method, and the compiler can trap any type mismatch errors early:

```
intQueue.Enqueue(99);
int myInt = intQueue.Dequeue();    // no casting necessary
Horse myHorse = intQueue.Dequeue(); // compiler error:
                                   // cannot implicitly convert type 'int' to
                                   // 'Horse'
```

You should be aware that this substitution of  $T$  for a specified type is not simply a textual replacement mechanism. Instead, the compiler performs a complete semantic substitution so that you can specify any valid type for  $T$ . Here are more examples:

```
struct Person
{
    ...
}
...
Queue<int> intQueue = new Queue<int>();
Queue<Person> personQueue = new Queue<Person>();
```

The first example creates a queue of integers, whereas the second example creates a queue of *Person* values. The compiler also generates the versions of the *Enqueue* and *Dequeue* methods for each queue. For the *intQueue* queue, these methods look like this:

```
public void Enqueue(int item);
public int Dequeue();
```

For the *personQueue* queue, these methods look like this:

```
public void Enqueue(Person item);  
public Person Dequeue();
```

Contrast these definitions with those of the object-based version of the *Queue* class shown in the preceding section. In the methods derived from the generic class, the *item* parameter to *Enqueue* is passed as a value type that does not require boxing. Similarly, the value returned by *Dequeue* is also a value type that does not need to be unboxed. A similar set of methods is generated for the other two queues.

#### NOTE

The *Systems.Collections.Generic* namespace in the .NET Framework class library provides an implementation to the *Queue* class that operates in a similar manner to the class just described. This namespace also includes several other collection classes, and they are described in more detail in [Chapter 18](#).

The type parameter does not have to be a simple class or value type. For example, you can create a queue of queues of integers (if you should ever find it necessary), like this:

```
Queue<Queue<int>> queueQueue = new Queue<Queue<int>>();
```

A generic class can have multiple type parameters. For example, the generic *Dictionary* class defined in the *System.Collections.Generic* namespace in the .NET Framework class library expects two type parameters: one type for keys, and another for the values (this class is described in more detail in [Chapter 18](#)).

#### NOTE

You can also define generic structures and interfaces by using the same type-parameter syntax as generic classes.

## Generics vs. generalized classes

It is important to be aware that a generic class that uses type parameters is different from a *generalized* class designed to take parameters that can be cast to different types. For example, the object-based version of the *Queue* class shown earlier is a generalized class. There is a *single* implementation of this class, and its methods take *object* parameters and return *object* types. You can use this class with *ints*, *strings*, and many other types, but in each case, you are using instances of the same class and you have to cast the data you are using to and from the *object* type.

Compare this with the *Queue<T>* class. Each time you use this class with a type parameter (such as *Queue<int>* or *Queue<Horse>*), you cause the compiler to generate an entirely new class that happens to have functionality defined by the generic class. This means that *Queue<int>* is a completely different type from *Queue<Horse>*, but they both happen to have the same behavior. You can think of a generic class as one that defines a template that is then used by the compiler to generate new type-specific classes on demand. The type-specific versions of a generic class (*Queue<int>*, *Queue<Horse>*, and so on) are referred to as *constructed types*, and you should treat them as distinctly different types (albeit ones that have a similar set of methods and properties).

## Generics and constraints

Occasionally, you will want to ensure that the type parameter used by a generic class identifies a type that provides certain methods. For example, if you are defining a *PrintableCollection* class, you might want to ensure that all objects stored in the class have a *Print* method. You can specify this condition by using a *constraint*.

By using a constraint, you can limit the type parameters of a generic class to those that implement a particular set of interfaces and therefore provide the methods defined by those interfaces. For example, if the *IPrintable* interface defined the *Print* method, you could create the *PrintableCollection* class like this:

```
public class PrintableCollection<T> where T : IPrintable
```

When you build this class with a type parameter, the compiler checks to ensure that the type used for *T* actually implements the *IPrintable* interface; if it

doesn't, it stops with a compilation error.

## Creating a generic class

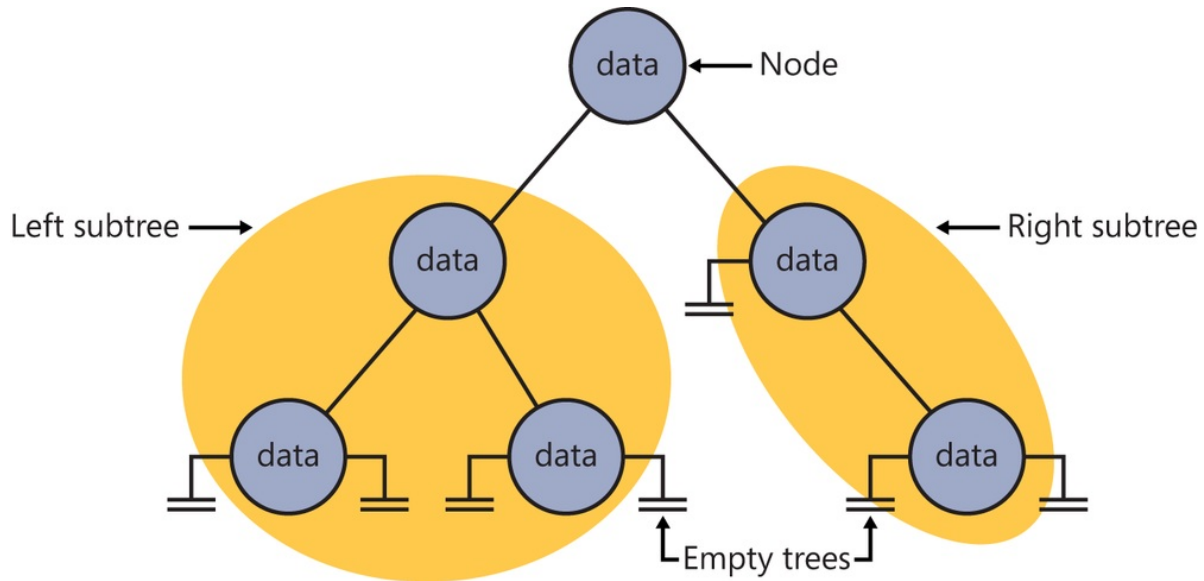
The *System.Collections.Generic* namespace in the .NET Framework class library contains a number of generic classes readily available for you. You can also define your own generic classes, which is what you will do in this section. Before you do this, let's cover a bit of background theory.

### The theory of binary trees

In the following exercises, you will define and use a class that represents a binary tree.

A *binary tree* is a useful data structure that you can use for a variety of operations, including sorting and searching through data very quickly. Volumes have been written on the minutiae of binary trees, but it is not the purpose of this book to cover this topic in detail. Instead, you'll look at just the pertinent facts. If you are interested in learning more, consult a book such as *The Art of Computer Programming, Volume 3: Sorting and Searching, 2nd Edition* by Donald E. Knuth (Addison-Wesley Professional, 1998). Despite its age, this is the recognized, seminal work on sort and search algorithms.

A binary tree is a recursive (self-referencing) data structure that can either be empty or contain three elements: a datum, which is typically referred to as the *node*, and two subtrees, which are themselves binary trees. The two subtrees are conventionally called the *left subtree* and the *right subtree* because they are typically depicted to the left and right of the node, respectively. Each left subtree or right subtree is either empty or contains a node and other subtrees. In theory, the whole structure can continue ad infinitum. The following image shows the structure of a small binary tree.



The real power of binary trees becomes evident when you use them for sorting data. If you start with an unordered sequence of objects of the same type, you can construct an ordered binary tree and then walk through the tree to visit each node in an ordered sequence. The algorithm for inserting an item  $I$  into an ordered binary tree  $B$  is shown here:

```

If the tree,  $B$ , is empty
Then
    Construct a new tree  $B$  with the new item  $I$  as the node, and empty left and
    right subtrees
Else
    Examine the value of the current node,  $N$ , of the tree,  $B$ 
    If the value of  $N$  is greater than that of the new item,  $I$ 
    Then
        If the left subtree of  $B$  is empty
        Then
            Construct a new left subtree of  $B$  with the item  $I$  as the node, and
            empty left and right subtrees
        Else
            Insert  $I$  into the left subtree of  $B$ 
        End If
    Else
        If the right subtree of  $B$  is empty
        Then
            Construct a new right subtree of  $B$  with the item  $I$  as the node, and
            empty left and right subtrees
        Else
            Insert  $I$  into the right subtree of  $B$ 

```

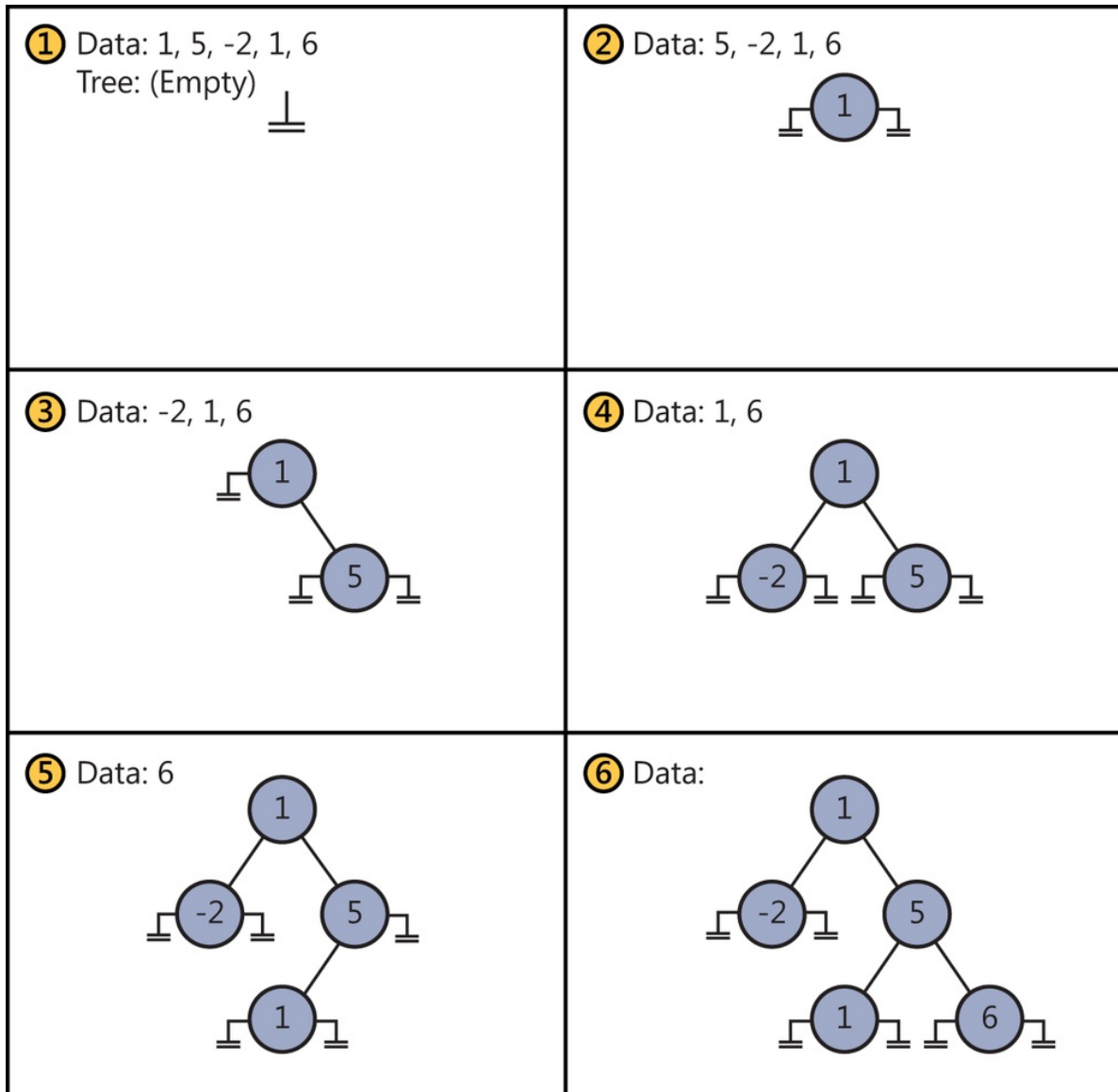
```
    End If  
  End If  
End If
```

Notice that this algorithm is recursive, calling itself to insert the item into the left or right subtree depending on how the value of the item compares with the current node in the tree.

#### NOTE

The definition of the expression *greater than* depends on the type of data in the item and node. For numeric data, greater than can be a simple arithmetic comparison, and for text data, it can be a string comparison; however, you must give other forms of data their own means of comparing values. You will learn more about this when you implement a binary tree in the upcoming section [Building a binary tree class by using generics](#).

If you start with an empty binary tree and an unordered sequence of objects, you can iterate through the unordered sequence, inserting each object into the binary tree by using this algorithm, resulting in an ordered tree. The next image shows the steps in the process for constructing a tree from a set of five integers.



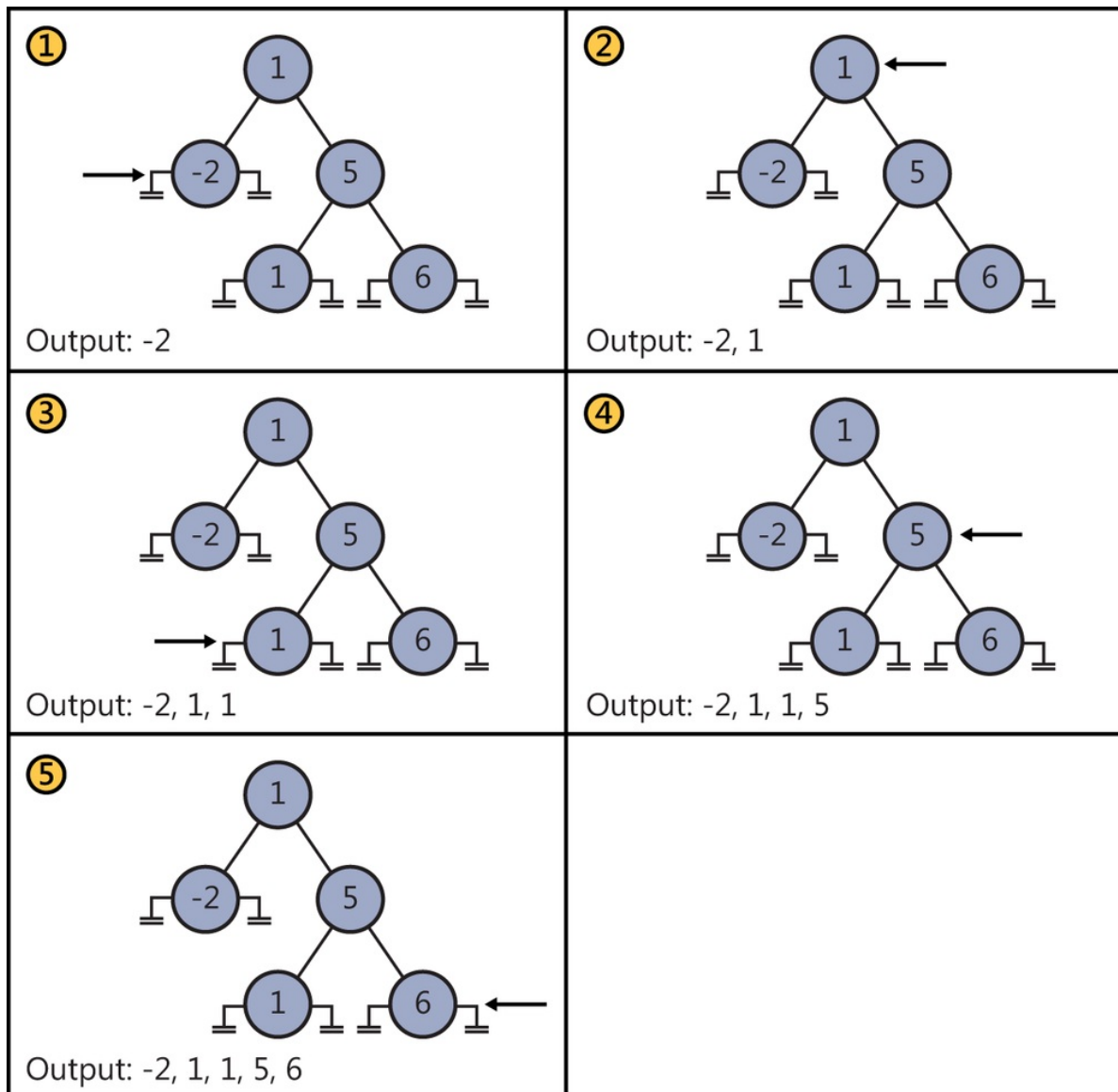
After you have built an ordered binary tree, you can display its contents in sequence by visiting each node in turn and printing the value found. The algorithm for achieving this task is also recursive:

```

If the left subtree is not empty
Then
    Display the contents of the left subtree
End If
Display the value of the node
If the right subtree is not empty
Then
    Display the contents of the right subtree
End If

```

The following image shows the steps in the process for outputting the tree. Notice that the integers are now displayed in ascending order.



## Building a binary tree class by using generics

In the following exercise, you will use generics to define a binary tree class capable of holding almost any type of data. The only restriction is that the data type must provide a means of comparing values between different instances.

The binary tree class is one that you might find useful in many different applications. Therefore, you will implement it as a class library rather than as an application in its own right. You can then reuse this class elsewhere without



having to copy the source code and recompile it. A *class library* is a set of compiled classes (and other types such as structures and delegates) stored in an assembly. An *assembly* is a file that usually has the .dll suffix. Other projects and applications can make use of the items in a class library by adding a reference to its assembly and then bringing its namespaces into scope by employing *using* statements. You will do this when you test the binary tree class.

**THE *SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE* AND *SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE<T>* INTERFACES**  
**THE ALGORITHM FOR INSERTING A NODE INTO A BINARY TREE REQUIRES**  
**YOU TO COMPARE THE VALUE OF THE NODE THAT YOU ARE INSERTING**  
**AGAINST NODES ALREADY IN THE TREE. IF YOU ARE USING A NUMERIC**  
**TYPE, SUCH AS *INT*, YOU CAN USE THE *<*, *>*, AND *==* OPERATORS.**  
**HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE USING SOME OTHER TYPE, SUCH AS *MAMMAL* OR**  
***CIRCLE* DESCRIBED IN EARLIER CHAPTERS, HOW DO YOU COMPARE**  
**OBJECTS?**

**IF YOU NEED TO CREATE A CLASS THAT REQUIRES YOU TO BE ABLE TO**  
**COMPARE VALUES ACCORDING TO SOME NATURAL (OR POSSIBLY**  
**UNNATURAL) ORDERING, YOU SHOULD IMPLEMENT THE *ICOMPARABLE***  
**INTERFACE. THIS INTERFACE CONTAINS A METHOD CALLED *COMPARETO*,**  
**WHICH TAKES A SINGLE PARAMETER SPECIFYING THE OBJECT TO BE**  
**COMPARED WITH THE CURRENT INSTANCE AND RETURNS AN INTEGER**  
**THAT INDICATES THE RESULT OF THE COMPARISON, AS SUMMARIZED BY**  
**THE FOLLOWING TABLE.**

VALUE	MEANING
LESS THAN 0	THE CURRENT INSTANCE IS LESS THAN THE VALUE OF THE PARAMETER.
0	THE CURRENT INSTANCE IS EQUAL TO THE VALUE OF THE PARAMETER.
GREATER THAN 0	THE CURRENT INSTANCE IS GREATER THAN THE VALUE OF THE PARAMETER.

**AS AN EXAMPLE, CONSIDER THE *CIRCLE* CLASS THAT WAS DESCRIBED IN**  
**CHAPTER 7. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT IT AGAIN HERE:**

```
CLASS CIRCLE
{
    PUBLIC CIRCLE(INT INITIALRADIUS)
    {
        RADIUS = INITIALRADIUS;
    }
}
```

```

        PUBLIC DOUBLE AREA()
        {
            RETURN MATH.PI * RADIUS * RADIUS;
        }
        PRIVATE DOUBLE RADIUS;
    }

```

YOU CAN MAKE THE *CIRCLE* CLASS “COMPARABLE” BY IMPLEMENTING THE *SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE* INTERFACE AND PROVIDING THE *COMPARETO* METHOD. IN THIS EXAMPLE, THE *COMPARETO* METHOD COMPARES *CIRCLE* OBJECTS BASED ON THEIR AREAS. A CIRCLE WITH A LARGER AREA IS CONSIDERED TO BE GREATER THAN A CIRCLE WITH A SMALLER AREA.

```

    CLASS CIRCLE : SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE
    {
        ...
        PUBLIC INT COMPARETO(OBJECT OBJ)
        {
            CIRCLE CIRCOBJ = (CIRCLE)OBJ; // CAST THE PARAMETER TO ITS REAL
            TYPE
            IF (THIS.AREA() == CIRCOBJ.AREA())
                RETURN 0;
            IF (THIS.AREA() > CIRCOBJ.AREA())
                RETURN 1;
            RETURN -1;
        }
    }

```

IF YOU EXAMINE THE *SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE* INTERFACE, YOU WILL SEE THAT ITS PARAMETER IS DEFINED AS AN *OBJECT*. HOWEVER, THIS APPROACH IS NOT TYPE-SAFE. TO UNDERSTAND WHY THIS IS SO, CONSIDER WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU TRY TO PASS SOMETHING THAT IS NOT A *CIRCLE* TO THE *COMPARETO* METHOD. THE *SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE* INTERFACE REQUIRES THE USE OF A CAST IN ORDER TO ACCESS THE *AREA* METHOD. IF THE PARAMETER IS NOT A *CIRCLE* BUT SOME OTHER TYPE OF OBJECT, THIS CAST WILL FAIL. HOWEVER, THE *SYSTEM* NAMESPACE ALSO DEFINES THE GENERIC *ICOMPARABLE<T>* INTERFACE, WHICH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING METHOD:

```

    INT COMPARETO(T OTHER);

```

NOTICE THAT THIS METHOD TAKES A TYPE PARAMETER (*T*) RATHER THAN AN *OBJECT* AND, THEREFORE, IT IS MUCH SAFER THAN THE NONGENERIC VERSION OF THE INTERFACE. THE FOLLOWING CODE SHOWS HOW YOU CAN IMPLEMENT THIS INTERFACE IN THE *CIRCLE*

## CLASS:

```
CLASS CIRCLE : SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE<CIRCLE>
{
    ...
    PUBLIC INT COMPARETO(CIRCLE OTHER)
    {
        IF (THIS.AREA() == OTHER.AREA())
            RETURN 0;
        IF (THIS.AREA() > OTHER.AREA())
            RETURN 1;
        RETURN -1;
    }
}
```

THE PARAMETER FOR THE *COMPARETO* METHOD MUST MATCH THE TYPE SPECIFIED IN THE INTERFACE, *ICOMPARABLE<CIRCLE>*. IN GENERAL, IT IS PREFERABLE TO IMPLEMENT THE *SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE<T>* INTERFACE RATHER THAN THE *SYSTEM.ICOMPARABLE* INTERFACE. YOU CAN ALSO IMPLEMENT BOTH, JUST AS MANY OF THE TYPES IN THE .NET FRAMEWORK DO.

Create the *Tree<TItem>* class

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project.
3. In the New Project dialog box, in the Templates pane on the left, click Visual C#. In the middle pane, select the Class Library template. In the Name box, type **BinaryTree**. In the Location box, specify \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 17 in your Documents folder, and then click OK.

### NOTE

Using the Class Library template, you can create assemblies that can be reused by multiple applications. To use a class in a class library in an application, you must first copy the assembly containing the compiled code for the class library to your computer (if you did not create it yourself) and then add a reference to this assembly.

4. In Solution Explorer, right-click Class1.cs, click Rename, and then change the name of the file to **Tree.cs**. Allow Visual Studio to change the name of the class as well as the name of the file when prompted.
5. In the Code and Text Editor window, change the definition of the *Tree* class to *Tree<TItem>*, as shown in bold type in the following code:

```
public class Tree<TItem>
{
}
```

6. In the Code and Text Editor window, modify the definition of the *Tree<TItem>* class to specify that the type parameter *TItem* must denote a type that implements the generic *IComparable<TItem>* interface. The changes are highlighted in bold in the code example that follows.

The modified definition of the *Tree<TItem>* class should look like this:

```
public class Tree<TItem> where TItem : IComparable<TItem>
{
}
```

7. Add three public, automatic properties to the *Tree<TItem>* class: a *TItem* property called *NodeData* and two *Tree<TItem>* properties called *LeftTree* and *RightTree*, as shown in the following code example in bold:

```
public class Tree<TItem> where TItem : IComparable<TItem>
{
    public TItem NodeData { get; set; }
    public Tree<TItem> LeftTree { get; set; }
    public Tree<TItem> RightTree { get; set; }
}
```

8. Add a constructor to the *Tree<TItem>* class that takes a single *TItem* parameter called *nodeValue*. In the constructor, set the *NodeData* property to *nodeValue*, and initialize the *LeftTree* and *RightTree* properties to *null*, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
public class Tree<TItem> where TItem : IComparable<TItem>
{
    ...
    public Tree(TItem nodeValue)
    {
        this.NodeData = nodeValue;
        this.LeftTree = null;
        this.RightTree = null;
    }
}
```

#### NOTE

Notice that the name of the constructor does not include the type parameter; it is called *Tree*, not *Tree<TItem>*.

9. Add a public method called *Insert* to the *Tree<TItem>* class as shown in bold in the code that follows. This method inserts a *TItem* value into the tree.

The method definition should look like this:

```
public class Tree<TItem> where TItem: IComparable<TItem>
{
    ...
    public void Insert(TItem newItem)
    {
    }
}
```

The *Insert* method implements the recursive algorithm described earlier for creating an ordered binary tree. The programmer will have used the constructor to create the initial node of the tree (there is no default constructor), so the *Insert* method can assume that the tree is not empty. The code that follows is the part of the algorithm after checking whether the tree is empty. It's reproduced here to help you understand the code you will write for the *Insert* method in the following steps:

```
...
Examine the value of the node, N, of the tree, B
If the value of N is greater than that of the new item, I
Then
    If the left subtree of B is empty
    Then
        Construct a new left subtree of B with the item I as the node, and
        empty
        left and right subtrees
    Else
        Insert I into the left subtree of B
    End If
...
```

10. In the *Insert* method, add a statement that declares a local variable of type *TItem*, called *currentNodeValue*. Initialize this variable to the value of the *NodeData* property of the tree, as shown in bold in the following example:

```
public void Insert(TItem newItem)
{
    TItem currentNodeValue = this.NodeData;
}
```

11. Add the *if-else* statement shown in bold in the following code to the *Insert* method after the definition of the *currentNodeValue* variable.

This statement uses the *CompareTo* method of the *IComparable<T>* interface to determine

whether the value of the current node is greater than that of the new item:

```
public void Insert(TItem newItem)
{
    TItem currentNodeValue = this.NodeData;
    if (currentNodeValue.CompareTo(newItem) > 0)
    {
        // Insert the new item into the left subtree
    }
    else
    {
        // Insert the new item into the right subtree
    }
}
```

12. In the *if* part of the code, immediately after the *// Insert the new item into the left subtree* comment, add the following statements:

```
if (this.LeftTree == null)
{
    this.LeftTree = new Tree<TItem>(newItem);
}
else
{
    this.LeftTree.Insert(newItem);
}
```

These statements check whether the left subtree is empty. If so, a new tree is created using the new item and it is attached as the left subtree of the current node; otherwise, the new item is inserted into the existing left subtree by calling the *Insert* method recursively.

13. In the *else* part of the outermost *if-else* statement, immediately after the *// Insert the new item into the right subtree* comment, add the equivalent code that inserts the new node into the right subtree:

```
if (this.RightTree == null)
{
    this.RightTree = new Tree<TItem>(newItem);
}
else
{
    this.RightTree.Insert(newItem);
}
```

14. Add another public method called *WalkTree* to the *Tree<TItem>* class after the *Insert* method. This method walks through the tree, visiting each node in sequence, and generates a string

representation of the data that the tree contains. The method definition should look like this:

```
public string WalkTree()
{
}
```

15. Add the statements shown in bold in the code that follows to the *WalkTree* method.

These statements implement the algorithm described earlier for traversing a binary tree. As each node is visited, the node value is returned by the method to the string:

```
public string WalkTree()
{
    string result = "";
    if (this.LeftTree != null)
    {
        result = this.LeftTree.WalkTree();
    }
    result += String.Format(" {0} ", this.NodeData.ToString());
    if (this.RightTree != null)
    {
        result += this.RightTree.WalkTree();
    }
    return result;
}
```

16. On the Build menu, click Build Solution. The class should compile cleanly, so correct any errors that are reported and rebuild the solution if necessary.

In the next exercise, you will test the *Tree<TItem>* class by creating binary trees of integers and strings.

Test the *Tree<TItem>* class

1. In Solution Explorer, right-click the BinaryTree solution, point to Add, and then click New Project.

#### NOTE

Ensure that you right-click the BinaryTree *solution* rather than the BinaryTree *project*.

2. Add a new project by using the Console Application template. Name the project **BinaryTreeTest**. Set the Location to \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 17 in your Documents folder, and then click OK.

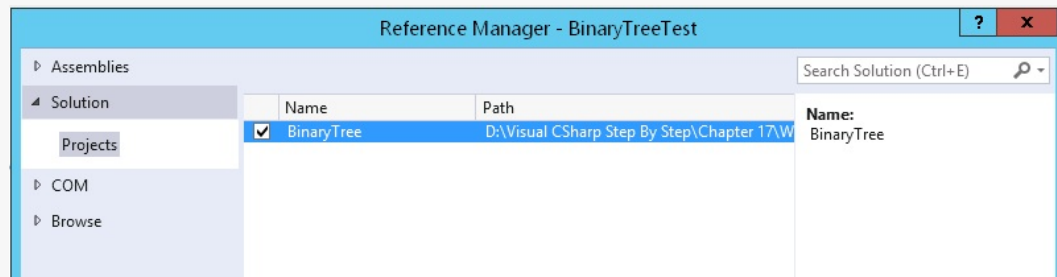
#### NOTE

A Visual Studio 2013 solution can contain more than one project. You are using this feature to add a second project to the *BinaryTree* solution for testing the *Tree<TItem>* class.

3. In Solution Explorer, right-click the *BinaryTreeTest* project, and then click Set As Startup Project.

The *BinaryTreeTest* project is highlighted in Solution Explorer. When you run the application, this is the project that will actually execute.

4. In Solution Explorer, right-click the *BinaryTreeTest* project, and then click Add Reference.
5. In the left pane of the Reference Manager - *BinaryTreeTest* dialog box, click Solution. In the middle pane, select the *BinaryTree* project (be sure to select the check box and not simply click the assembly), and then click OK.



This step adds the *BinaryTree* assembly to the list of references for the *BinaryTreeTest* project in Solution Explorer. If you examine the References folder for the *BinaryTreeTest* project in Solution Explorer, you should see the *BinaryTree* assembly listed at the top. You will now be able to create *Tree<TItem>* objects in the *BinaryTreeTest* project.

#### NOTE

If the class library project is not part of the same solution as the project that uses it, you must add a reference to the assembly (the .dll file) and not to the class library project. You can do this by browsing for the assembly in the Reference Manager dialog box. You will use this technique in the final set of exercises in this chapter.

6. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the *Program* class in the *program.cs* file, add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the class?

**using BinaryTree;**

7. Add the statements shown below in bold to *Main* method.

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
```



```

Tree<int> tree1 = new Tree<int>(10);
tree1.Insert(5);
tree1.Insert(11);
tree1.Insert(5);
tree1.Insert(-12);
tree1.Insert(15);
tree1.Insert(0);
tree1.Insert(14);
tree1.Insert(-8);
tree1.Insert(10);
tree1.Insert(8);
tree1.Insert(8);
string sortedData = tree1.WalkTree();
Console.WriteLine("Sorted data is: {0}", sortedData);
}

```

These statements create a new binary tree for holding *ints*. The constructor creates an initial node containing the value 10. The *Insert* statements add nodes to the tree, and the *WalkTree* method generates a string representing the contents of the tree, which should appear sorted in ascending order when this string is displayed.

#### NOTE

Remember that the *int* keyword in C# is just an alias for the *System.Int32* type; whenever you declare an *int* variable, you are actually declaring a *struct* variable of type *System.Int32*. The *System.Int32* type implements the *Comparable* and *Comparable<T>* interfaces, which is why you can create *Tree<int>* objects. Similarly, the *string* keyword is an alias for *System.String*, which also implements *Comparable* and *Comparable<T>*.

8. On the Build menu, click Build Solution, verify that the solution compiles, and then correct any errors, if necessary.

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Verify that the program runs and displays the values in the following sequence: -12 -8 0 5 5 8 8 10 10 11 14 15

10. Press the Enter key to return to Visual Studio 2013.
11. Add the following statements shown in bold to the end of the *Main* method in the *Program* class, after the existing code:

```

static void Main(string[] args)
{
    ...
    Tree<string> tree2 = new Tree<string>("Hello");
}

```

```

        tree2.Insert("World");
        tree2.Insert("How");
        tree2.Insert("Are");
        tree2.Insert("You");
        tree2.Insert("Today");
        tree2.Insert("I");
        tree2.Insert("Hope");
        tree2.Insert("You");
        tree2.Insert("Are");
        tree2.Insert("Feeling");
        tree2.Insert("Well");
        tree2.Insert("!");
        sortedData = tree2.WalkTree();
        Console.WriteLine("Sorted data is: {0}", sortedData);
    }

```

These statements create another binary tree for holding *strings*, populate it with some test data, and then print the tree. This time, the data is sorted alphabetically.

12. On the Build menu, click Build Solution, verify that the solution compiles, and then correct any errors, if necessary.
13. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Verify that the program runs and displays the integer values as before, followed by the strings in the following sequence: ! Are Are Feeling Hello Hope How I Today Well World You You

```

C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
Sorted data is: -12 -8 0 5 5 8 8 10 10 11 14 15
Sorted data is: ! Are Are Feeling Hello Hope How I Today Well World
You You
Press any key to continue . . .

```

- Press the Enter key to return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Creating a generic method

As well as defining generic classes, you can create generic methods.

With a generic method, you can specify the types of the parameters and the return type by using a type parameter in a manner similar to that used when defining a generic class. In this way, you can define generalized methods that are type-safe and avoid the overhead of casting (and boxing, in some cases). Generic methods are frequently used in conjunction with generic classes; you need them for methods that take generic types as parameters or that have a return type that

is a generic type.

You define generic methods by using the same type parameter syntax that you use when creating generic classes. (You can also specify constraints.) For example, the generic *Swap*<*T*> method in the code that follows swaps the values in its parameters. Because this functionality is useful regardless of the type of data being swapped, it is helpful to define it as a generic method:

```
static void Swap<T>(ref T first, ref T second)
{
    T temp = first;
    first = second;
    second = temp;
}
```

You invoke the method by specifying the appropriate type for its type parameter. The following examples show how to invoke the *Swap*<*T*> method to swap over two *ints* and two *strings*:

```
int a = 1, b = 2;
Swap<int>(ref a, ref b);
...
string s1 = "Hello", s2 = "World";
Swap<string>(ref s1, ref s2);
```

#### NOTE

Just as instantiating a generic class with different type parameters causes the compiler to generate different types, each distinct use of the *Swap*<*T*> method causes the compiler to generate a different version of the method. *Swap*<*int*> is not the same method as *Swap*<*string*>—both methods just happen to have been generated from the same generic template, so they exhibit the same behavior, albeit over different types.

## Defining a generic method to build a binary tree

In the previous exercise, you created a generic class for implementing a binary tree. The *Tree*<*TItem*> class provides the *Insert* method for adding data items to the tree. However, if you want to add a large number of items, repeated calls to the *Insert* method are not very convenient. In the following exercise, you will define a generic method called *InsertIntoTree* that you can use to insert a list of

data items into a tree with a single method call. You will test this method by using it to insert a list of characters into a tree of characters.

Write the *InsertIntoTree* method

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, create a new project by using the Console Application template. In the New Project dialog box, name the project **BuildTree**. Set the Location to \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 17 in your Documents folder. In the Solution list, click Create New Solution, and then click OK.
2. On the Project menu, click Add Reference. In the Reference Manager - BuildTree dialog box, click the Browse button (not the Browse tab in the left pane).
3. In the Select The Files To Reference dialog box, move to the folder \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 17\BinaryTree\BinaryTree\bin\Debug in your Documents folder, click BinaryTree.dll, and then click Add.
4. In the Reference Manager – BuildTree dialog box, verify that the BinaryTree.dll assembly is listed and that the check box for this assembly is selected, and then click OK.

The *BinaryTree* assembly is added to the list of references shown in Solution Explorer.

5. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the Program.cs file, add the following *using* directive to the top of the Program.cs file:

```
using BinaryTree;
```

Remember, this namespace contains the *Tree<TItem>* class.

6. Add after the *Main* method a method called *InsertIntoTree* to the *Program* class. This should be a *static void* method that takes a *Tree<TItem>* parameter and a *params* array of *TItem* elements called *data*. The tree parameter should be passed by reference, for reasons that will be described in a later step.

The method definition should look like this:

```
static void InsertIntoTree<TItem>(ref Tree<TItem> tree,
    params TItem[] data)
{
}
```

7. The *TItem* type used for the elements being inserted into the binary tree must implement the *Comparable<TItem>* interface. Modify the definition of the *InsertIntoTree* method and add the *where* clause shown in bold in the following code:

```
static void InsertIntoTree<TItem>(ref Tree<TItem> tree,
    params TItem[] data) where TItem : Comparable<TItem>
{
}
```

8. Add the statements shown in bold in the example that follows to the *InsertIntoTree* method: These statements iterate through the *params* list, adding each item to the tree by using the *Insert* method. If the value specified by the tree parameter is *null* initially, a new *Tree<TItem>* is created; this is why the tree parameter is passed by reference.

```
static void InsertIntoTree<TItem>(ref Tree<TItem> tree,
    params TItem[] data) where TItem : Comparable<TItem>
{
    foreach (TItem datum in data)
    {
        if (tree == null)
        {
            tree = new Tree<TItem>(datum);
        }
        else
        {
            tree.Insert(datum);
        }
    }
}
```

Test the *InsertIntoTree* method

1. In the *Main* method of the *Program* class, add the following statements

shown in bold that create a new *Tree* for holding character data, populate it with some sample data by using the *InsertIntoTree* method, and then display it by using the *WalkTree* method of *Tree*:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Tree<char> charTree = null;
    InsertIntoTree<char>(ref charTree, 'M', 'X', 'A', 'M', 'Z', 'Z', 'N');
    string sortedData = charTree.WalkTree();
    Console.WriteLine("Sorted data is: {0}", sortedData);
}
```

2. On the Build menu, click Build Solution, verify that the solution compiles, and then correct any errors if necessary.

3. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program runs and displays the character values in the following order:  
A M M N X Z Z

4. Press the Enter key to return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Variance and generic interfaces

**Chapter 8** demonstrates that you can use the *object* type to hold a value or reference of any other type. For example, the following code is completely legal:

```
string myString = "Hello";
object myObject = myString;
```

Remember that in inheritance terms, the *String* class is derived from the *Object* class, so all strings are objects.

Now, consider the following generic interface and class:

```
interface IWrapper<T>
{
    void SetData(T data);
    T GetData();
}
class Wrapper<T> : IWrapper<T>
```

```

{
    private T storedData;
    void IWrapper<T>.SetData(T data)
    {
        this.storedData = data;
    }
    T IWrapper<T>.GetData()
    {
        return this.storedData;
    }
}

```

The *Wrapper<T>* class provides a simple wrapper around a specified type. The *IWrapper* interface defines the *SetData* method that the *Wrapper<T>* class implements to store the data and the *GetData* method that the *Wrapper<T>* class implements to retrieve the data. You can create an instance of this class and use it to wrap a string like this:

```

Wrapper<string> stringWrapper = new Wrapper<string>();
IWrapper<string> storedStringWrapper = stringWrapper;
storedStringWrapper.SetData("Hello");
Console.WriteLine("Stored value is {0}", storedStringWrapper.GetData());

```

The code creates an instance of the *Wrapper<string>* type. It references the object through the *IWrapper<string>* interface to call the *SetData* method. (The *Wrapper<T>* type implements its interfaces explicitly, so you must call the methods through an appropriate interface reference.) The code also calls the *GetData* method through the *IWrapper<string>* interface. If you run this code, it outputs the message “Stored value is Hello”.

Take a look at the following line of code:

```

IWrapper<object> storedObjectWrapper = stringWrapper;

```

This statement is similar to the one that creates the *IWrapper<string>* reference in the previous code example, the difference being that the type parameter is *object* rather than *string*. Is this code legal? Remember that all strings are objects (you can assign a *string* value to an *object* reference, as shown earlier), so in theory this statement looks promising. However, if you try it, the statement will fail to compile with the message “Cannot implicitly convert type

‘Wrapper<string>’ to ‘IWrapper<object>’.”

You can try an explicit cast such as this:

```
IWrapper<object> storedObjectWrapper = (IWrapper<object>)stringWrapper;
```

This code compiles but will fail at run time with an *InvalidCastException* exception. The problem is that although all strings are objects, the converse is not true. If this statement were allowed, you could write code like this, which ultimately attempts to store a *Circle* object in a *string* field:

```
IWrapper<object> storedObjectWrapper = (IWrapper<object>)stringWrapper;  
Circle myCircle = new Circle();  
storedObjectWrapper.SetData(myCircle);
```

The *IWrapper<T>* interface is said to be *invariant*. You cannot assign an *IWrapper<A>* object to a reference of type *IWrapper<B>*, even if type *A* is derived from type *B*. By default, C# implements this restriction to ensure the type safety of your code.

## Covariant interfaces

Suppose that you defined the *IStoreWrapper<T>* and *IRetrieveWrapper<T>* interfaces, shown in the following example, in place of *IWrapper<T>* and implemented these interfaces in the *Wrapper<T>* class, like this:

```
interface IStoreWrapper<T>  
{  
    void SetData(T data);  
}  
interface IRetrieveWrapper<T>  
{  
    T GetData();  
}  
class Wrapper<T> : IStoreWrapper<T>, IRetrieveWrapper<T>  
{  
    private T storedData;  
    void IStoreWrapper<T>.SetData(T data)  
    {  
        this.storedData = data;  
    }  
    T IRetrieveWrapper<T>.GetData()
```



```

    {
        return this.storedData;
    }
}

```

Functionally, the *Wrapper<T>* class is the same as before, except that you access the *SetData* and *GetData* methods through different interfaces.

```

Wrapper<string> stringWrapper = new Wrapper<string>();
IStoreWrapper<string> storedStringWrapper = stringWrapper;
storedStringWrapper.SetData("Hello");
IRetrieveWrapper<string> retrievedStringWrapper = stringWrapper;
Console.WriteLine("Stored value is {0}", retrievedStringWrapper.GetData());

```

Thus, is the following code legal?

```

IRetrieveWrapper<object> retrievedObjectWrapper = stringWrapper;

```

The quick answer is no, and it fails to compile with the same error as before. But, if you think about it, although the C# compiler has deemed that this statement is not type safe, the reasons for assuming this are no longer valid. The *IRetrieveWrapper<T>* interface only allows you to read the data held in the *Wrapper<T>* object by using the *GetData* method, and it does not provide any way to change the data. In situations such as this where the type parameter occurs only as the return value of the methods in a generic interface, you can inform the compiler that some implicit conversions are legal and that it does not have to enforce strict type-safety. You do this by specifying the *out* keyword when you declare the type parameter, like this:

```

interface IRetrieveWrapper<out T>
{
    T GetData();
}

```

This feature is called *covariance*. You can assign an *IRetrieveWrapper<A>* object to an *IRetrieveWrapper<B>* reference as long as there is a valid conversion from type *A* to type *B*, or type *A* derives from type *B*. The following code now compiles and runs as expected:

```
// string derives from object, so this is now legal
IRetrieveWrapper<object> retrievedObjectWrapper = stringWrapper;
```

You can specify the *out* qualifier with a type parameter only if the type parameter occurs as the return type of methods. If you use the type parameter to specify the type of any method parameters, the *out* qualifier is illegal and your code will not compile. Also, covariance works only with reference types. This is because value types cannot form inheritance hierarchies. So, the following code will not compile because *int* is a value type:

```
Wrapper<int> intWrapper = new Wrapper<int>();
IStoreWrapper<int> storedIntWrapper = intWrapper; // this is legal
...
// the following statement is not legal - ints are not objects
IRetrieveWrapper<object> retrievedObjectWrapper = intWrapper;
```

Several of the interfaces defined by the .NET Framework exhibit covariance, including the *IEnumerable<T>* interface, which is detailed in [Chapter 19](#).

#### NOTE

Only interface and delegate types (which are covered in [Chapter 18](#)) can be declared as covariant. You do not specify the *out* modifier with generic classes.

## Contravariant interfaces

Contravariance follows a similar principle to covariance except that it works in the opposite direction; it enables you to use a generic interface to reference an object of type *B* through a reference to type *A* as long as type *B* derives type *A*. This sounds complicated, so it is worth looking at an example from the .NET Framework class library.

The *System.Collections.Generic* namespace in the .NET Framework provides an interface called *IComparer*, which looks like this:

```
public interface IComparer<in T>
{
    int Compare(T x, T y);
}
```

A class that implements this interface has to define the *Compare* method, which is used to compare two objects of the type specified by the *T* type parameter. The *Compare* method is expected to return an integer value: zero if the parameters *x* and *y* have the same value, negative if *x* is less than *y*, and positive if *x* is greater than *y*. The following code shows an example that sorts objects according to their hash code. (The *GetHashCode* method is implemented by the *Object* class. It simply returns an integer value that identifies the object. All reference types inherit this method and can override it with their own implementations.)

```
class ObjectComparer : IComparer<Object>
{
    int IComparer<Object>.Compare(Object x, Object y)
    {
        int xHash = x.GetHashCode();
        int yHash = y.GetHashCode();
        if (xHash == yHash)
            return 0;
        if (xHash < yHash)
            return -1;
        return 1;
    }
}
```

You can create an *ObjectComparer* object and call the *Compare* method through the *IComparer<Object>* interface to compare two objects, like this:

```
Object x = ...;
Object y = ...;
ObjectComparer objectComparer = new ObjectComparer();
IComparer<Object> objectComparator = objectComparer;
int result = objectComparator.Compare(x, y);
```

That's the boring bit. What is more interesting is that you can reference this same object through a version of the *IComparer* interface that compares strings, like this:

```
IComparer<String> stringComparator = objectComparer;
```

At first glance, this statement seems to break every rule of type safety that you can imagine. However, if you think about what the *IComparer<T>* interface

does, this approach makes sense. The purpose of the *Compare* method is to return a value based on a comparison between the parameters passed in. If you can compare *Objects*, you certainly should be able to compare *Strings*, which are just specialized types of *Objects*. After all, a *String* should be able to do anything that an *Object* can do—that is the purpose of inheritance.

This still sounds a little presumptive, however. How does the C# compiler know that you are not going to perform any type-specific operations in the code for the *Compare* method that might fail if you invoke the method through an interface based on a different type? If you revisit the definition of the *IComparer* interface, you can see the *in* qualifier prior to the type parameter:

```
public interface IComparer<in T>
{
    int Compare(T x, T y);
}
```

The *in* keyword tells the C# compiler that either you can pass the type *T* as the parameter type to methods or you can pass any type that derives from *T*. You cannot use *T* as the return type from any methods. Essentially, this makes it possible for you to reference an object either through a generic interface based on the object type or through a generic interface based on a type that derives from the object type. Basically, if a type *A* exposes some operations, properties, or fields, in that case if type *B* derives from type *A*, it must also expose the same operations (which might behave differently if they have been overridden), properties, and fields. Consequently, it should be safe to substitute an object of type *B* for an object of type *A*.

Covariance and contravariance might seem like fringe topics in the world of generics, but they are useful. For example, the *List<T>* generic collection class (in the *System.Collections.Generic* namespace) uses *IComparer<T>* objects to implement the *Sort* and *BinarySearch* methods. A *List<Object>* object can contain a collection of objects of any type, so the *Sort* and *BinarySearch* methods need to be able to sort objects of any type. Without using contravariance, the *Sort* and *BinarySearch* methods would need to include logic that determines the real types of the items being sorted or searched and then implement a type-specific sort or search mechanism. However, unless you are a mathematician, it can be quite difficult to recall what covariance and

contravariance actually do. The way I remember, based on the examples in this section, is as follows:

- **Covariance example.** If the methods in a generic interface can return strings, they can also return objects. (All strings are objects.)
- **Contravariance example.** If the methods in a generic interface can take object parameters, they can take string parameters. (If you can perform an operation by using an object, you can perform the same operation by using a string because all strings are objects.)

#### NOTE

As with covariance, only interface and delegate types can be declared as contravariant. You do not specify the *in* modifier with generic classes.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to use generics to create type-safe classes. You saw how to instantiate a generic type by specifying a type parameter. You also saw how to implement a generic interface and define a generic method. Finally, you learned how to define covariant and contravariant generic interfaces that can operate with a hierarchy of types.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 18](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Instantiate an object by using a generic type	Specify the appropriate generic type parameter. For example:  <pre>Queue&lt;int&gt; myQueue = new Queue&lt;int&gt;();</pre>

Create a new generic type	<p>Define the class by using a type parameter. For example:</p> <pre>public class Tree&lt;TItem&gt; {     ... }</pre>
Restrict the type that can be substituted for the generic type parameter	<p>Specify a constraint by using a <i>where</i> clause when defining the class. For example:</p> <pre>public class Tree&lt;TItem&gt; where TItem : IComparable&lt;TItem&gt; {     ... }</pre>
Define a generic method	<p>Define the method by using type parameters. For example:</p> <pre>static void InsertIntoTree&lt;TItem&gt; (Tree&lt;TItem&gt; tree, params TItem[] data) {     ... }</pre>
Invoke a generic method	<p>Provide types for each of the type parameters. For example:</p> <pre>InsertIntoTree&lt;char&gt;(charTree, 'Z', 'X');</pre>
Define a covariant interface	<p>Specify the out qualifier for covariant type parameters. Reference the covariant type parameters only as the return types from methods and not as the types for method parameters:</p> <pre>interface IRetrieveWrapper&lt;out T&gt; {     T GetData(); }</pre>
Define a contravariant interface	<p>Specify the in qualifier for contravariant type parameters. Reference the contravariant type parameters only as the types of method</p>

interface

use contravariant type parameters only as the types of method parameters and not as return types:

```
public interface IComparer<in T>
{
    int Compare(T x, T y);
}
```

# Chapter 18. Using collections

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **What are collection classes?**
- Create type-safe collections.
- Populate a collection with a set of data.
- Manipulate and access the data items held in a collection.
- **The *List<T>* collection class**

**Chapter 10** introduces arrays for holding sets of data. Arrays are very useful in this respect, but they have their limitations. Arrays provide only limited functionality; for example, it is not easy to increase or reduce the size of an array, and neither is it a simple matter to sort the data held in an array. Another issue is that arrays only really provide a single means of accessing data, by using an integer index. If your application needs to store and retrieve data by using some other mechanism, such as the first-in, first-out queue mechanism described in **Chapter 17** arrays might not be the most suitable data structure to use. This is where collections can prove useful.

## What are collection classes?

The Microsoft .NET Framework provides several classes that collect elements together such that an application can access them in specialized ways. These are the collection classes mentioned in **Chapter 17**, and they live in the *System.Collections.Generic* namespace.

As the namespace implies, these collections are generic types; they all expect you to provide a type parameter indicating the kind of data that your application will be storing in them. Each collection class is optimized for a particular form



of data storage and access, and each provides specialized methods that support this functionality. For example, the *Stack<T>* class implements a last-in, first-out model, where you add an item to the top of the stack by using the *Push* method, and you take an item from the top of the stack by using the *Pop* method. The *Pop* method always retrieves the most recently pushed item and removes it from the stack. In contrast, the *Queue<T>* type provides the *Enqueue* and *Dequeue* methods described in [Chapter 17](#). The *Enqueue* method adds an item to the queue, whereas the *Dequeue* method retrieves items in the same order and removes them from the queue, implementing a first-in, first-out model. A variety of other collection classes are also available, and the following table provides a summary of the most commonly used ones.

Collection	Description
<i>List&lt;T&gt;</i>	A list of objects that can be accessed by index, like an array, but with additional methods to search the list and sort the contents of the list.
<i>Queue&lt;T&gt;</i>	A first-in, first-out data structure, with methods to add an item to one end of the queue, remove an item from the other end, and examine an item without removing it.
<i>Stack&lt;T&gt;</i>	A first-in, last-out data structure with methods to push an item onto the top of the stack, pop an item from the top of the stack, and examine the item at the top of the stack without removing it.
<i>LinkedList&lt;T&gt;</i>	A double-ended ordered list, optimized to support insertion and removal at either end. This collection can act like a queue or a stack, but it also supports random access like a list.
<i>HashSet&lt;T&gt;</i>	An unordered set of values that is optimized for fast retrieval of data. It provides set-oriented methods for determining whether the items it holds are a subset of those in another <i>HashSet&lt;T&gt;</i> object as well as computing the intersection and union of <i>HashSet&lt;T&gt;</i> objects.
<i>Dictionary&lt;TKey, TValue&gt;</i>	A collection of values that can be identified and retrieved by using keys rather than indexes.
<i>SortedList&lt;TKey, TValue&gt;</i>	A sorted list of key/value pairs. The keys must implement the <i>Comparable&lt;T&gt;</i> interface.

The following sections provide a brief overview of these collection classes. Refer to the .NET Framework class library documentation for more details on each class.

#### NOTE

The .NET Framework class library also provides another set of collection types in the *System.Collections* namespace. These are nongeneric collections, and they were designed before C# supported generic types (generics were added to the version of C# developed for the .NET Framework version 2.0). With one exception, these types all store object references, and you are required to perform the appropriate casts when storing and retrieving items. These classes are included for backward compatibility with existing applications, and it is not recommended that you use them when building new solutions. In fact, these classes are not available if you are building Windows Store apps.

The one exception that does not store object references is the *BitArray* class. This class implements a compact array of Boolean values by using an *int*; each bit indicates true (1) or false (0). If this sounds familiar, it should; this is very similar to the *IntBits* struct that you saw in the examples in [Chapter 16](#). The *BitArray* class is available to Windows Store apps.

One other important set of collections is available, and these classes are defined in the *System.Collections.Generic.Concurrent* namespace. These are thread-safe collection classes that you can use when building multithreaded applications. [Chapter 24](#) provides more information on these classes.

## The *List<T>* collection class

The generic *List<T>* class is the simplest of the collection classes. You can use it much like an array—you can reference an existing element in a *List<T>* collection by using ordinary array notation, with square brackets and the index of the element, although you cannot use array notation to add new elements. However, in general, the *List<T>* class provides more flexibility than arrays and is designed to overcome the following restrictions exhibited by arrays:

- If you want to resize an array, you have to create a new array, copy the elements (leaving out some if the new array is smaller), and then update any references to the original array so that they refer to the new array.
- If you want to remove an element from an array, you have to move all the trailing elements up by one place. Even this doesn't quite work, because you end up with two copies of the last element.
- If you want to insert an element into an array, you have to move elements down by one place to make a free slot. However, you lose the last element of the array!

The *List<T>* collection class provides the following features that preclude these

limitations:

- You don't need to specify the capacity of a *List<T>* collection when you create it; it can grow and shrink as you add elements. There is an overhead associated with this dynamic behavior, and if necessary you can specify an initial size. However, if you exceed this size, then the *List<T>* collection will simply grow as necessary.
- You can remove a specified element from a *List<T>* collection by using the *Remove* method. The *List<T>* collection automatically reorders its elements and closes the gap. You can also remove an item at a specified position in a *List<T>* collection by using the *RemoveAt* method.
- You can add an element to the end of a *List<T>* collection by using its *Add* method. You supply the element to be added. The *List<T>* collection resizes itself automatically.
- You can insert an element into the middle of a *List<T>* collection by using the *Insert* method. Again, the *List<T>* collection resizes itself.
- You can easily sort the data in a *List<T>* object by calling the *Sort* method.

#### NOTE

As with arrays, if you use *foreach* to iterate through a *List<T>* collection, you cannot use the iteration variable to modify the contents of the collection. Additionally, you cannot call the *Remove*, *Add*, or *Insert* method in a *foreach* loop that iterates through a *List<T>* collection; any attempt to do so results in an *InvalidOperationException* exception.

Here's an example that shows how you can create, manipulate, and iterate through the contents of a *List<int>* collection:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
...
List<int> numbers = new List<int>();
// Fill the List<int> by using the Add method
foreach (int number in new int[12]{10, 9, 8, 7, 7, 6, 5, 10, 4, 3, 2, 1})
{
    numbers.Add(number);
}
```

```

        numbers.Add(number);
    }
    // Insert an element in the penultimate position in the list, and move the last item
    up
    // The first parameter is the position; the second parameter is the value being
    inserted
    numbers.Insert(numbers.Count-1, 99);
    // Remove first element whose value is 7 (the 4th element, index 3)
    numbers.Remove(7);
    // Remove the element that's now the 7th element, index 6 (10)
    numbers.RemoveAt(6);
    // Iterate remaining 11 elements using a for statement
    Console.WriteLine("Iterating using a for statement:");
    for (int i = 0; i < numbers.Count; i++)
    {
        int number = numbers[i]; // Note the use of array syntax
        Console.WriteLine(number);
    }
    // Iterate the same 11 elements using a foreach statement
    Console.WriteLine("\nIterating using a foreach statement:");
    foreach (int number in numbers)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(number);
    }
}

```

Here is the output of this code:

```

Iterating using a for statement:
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
99
1
Iterating using a foreach statement:
10
9
8
7
6
5
4

```

3  
2  
99  
1

#### NOTE

The way you determine the number of elements for a *List<T>* collection is different from querying the number of items in an array. When using a *List<T>* collection, you examine the *Count* property; when using an array, you examine the *Length* property.

## The *LinkedList<T>* collection class

The *LinkedList<T>* collection class implements a doubly linked list. Each item in the list holds the value for the item together with a reference to the next item in the list (the *Next* property) and the previous item (the *Previous* property). The item at the start of the list has the *Previous* property set to *null*, and the item at the end of the list has the *Next* property set to *null*.

Unlike the *List<T>* class, *LinkedList<T>* does not support array notation for inserting or examining elements. Instead, you can use the *AddFirst* method to insert an element at the start of the list, moving the first item up and setting its *Previous* property to refer to the new item, or the *AddLast* method to insert an element at the end of the list, setting the *Next* property of the previously last item to refer to the new item. You can also use the *AddBefore* and *AddAfter* methods to insert an element before or after a specified item in the list (you have to retrieve the item first).

You can find the first item in a *LinkedList<T>* collection by querying the *First* property, whereas the *Last* property returns a reference to the final item in the list. To iterate through a linked list, you can start at one end and step through the *Next* or *Previous* references until you find an item with a *null* value for this property. Alternatively, you can use a *foreach* statement, which iterates forward through a *LinkedList<T>* object and stops automatically at the end.

You delete an item from a *LinkedList<T>* collection by using the *Remove*, *RemoveFirst*, and *RemoveLast* methods.

The following example shows a *LinkedList<T>* collection in action. Notice how the code that iterates through the list by using a *for* statement steps through the

*Next* (or *Previous*) references, only stopping when it reaches a *null* reference, which is the end of the list:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
...
LinkedList<int> numbers = new LinkedList<int>();
// Fill the List<int> by using the AddFirst method
foreach (int number in new int[] { 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 })
{
    numbers.AddFirst(number);
}
// Iterate using a for statement
Console.WriteLine("Iterating using a for statement:");
for (LinkedListNode<int> node = numbers.First; node != null; node = node.Next)
{
    int number = node.Value;
    Console.WriteLine(number);
}
// Iterate using a foreach statement
Console.WriteLine("\nIterating using a foreach statement:");
foreach (int number in numbers)
{
    Console.WriteLine(number);
}
// Iterate backwards
Console.WriteLine("\nIterating list in reverse order:");
for (LinkedListNode<int> node = numbers.Last; node != null; node = node.Previous)
{
    int number = node.Value;
    Console.WriteLine(number);
}
```

Here is the output generated by this code:

```
Iterating using a for statement:
2
4
6
8
10
Iterating using a foreach statement:
2
4
6
~
```

```
8
10
Iterating list in reverse order:
10
8
6
4
2
```

## The *Queue*<*T*> collection class

The *Queue*<*T*> class implements a first-in, first-out mechanism. An element is inserted into the queue at the back (the *Enqueue* operation) and is removed from the queue at the front (the *Dequeue* operation).

The following code is an example showing a *Queue*<*int*> collection and its common operations:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
...
Queue<int> numbers = new Queue<int>();
// fill the queue
Console.WriteLine("Populating the queue:");
foreach (int number in new int[4]{9, 3, 7, 2})
{
    numbers.Enqueue(number);
    Console.WriteLine("{0} has joined the queue", number);
}
// iterate through the queue
Console.WriteLine("\nThe queue contains the following items:");
foreach (int number in numbers)
{
    Console.WriteLine(number);
}
// empty the queue
Console.WriteLine("\nDraining the queue:");
while (numbers.Count > 0)
{
    int number = numbers.Dequeue();
    Console.WriteLine("{0} has left the queue", number);
}
```

Here is the output from this code:

```
Populating the queue:
9 has joined the queue
3 has joined the queue
7 has joined the queue
2 has joined the queue
The queue contains the following items:
9
3
7
2
Draining the queue:
9 has left the queue
3 has left the queue
7 has left the queue
2 has left the queue
```

## The *Stack*<*T*> collection class

The *Stack*<*T*> class implements a last-in, first-out mechanism. An element joins the stack at the top (the push operation) and leaves the stack at the top (the pop operation). To visualize this, think of a stack of dishes: new dishes are added to the top and dishes are removed from the top, making the last dish to be placed on the stack the first one to be removed. (The dish at the bottom is rarely used and will inevitably require washing before you can put any food on it, because it will be covered in grime!) Here's an example—notice the order in which the items are listed by the *foreach* loop:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
...
Stack<int> numbers = new Stack<int>();
// fill the stack
Console.WriteLine("Pushing items onto the stack:");
foreach (int number in new int[4]{9, 3, 7, 2})
{
    numbers.Push(number);
    Console.WriteLine("{0} has been pushed on the stack", number);
}
// iterate through the stack
Console.WriteLine("\nThe stack now contains:");
foreach (int number in numbers)
{
    Console.WriteLine(number);
}
```



```
// empty the stack
Console.WriteLine("\nPopping items from the stack:");
while (numbers.Count > 0)
{
    int number = numbers.Pop();
    Console.WriteLine("{0} has been popped off the stack", number);
}
```

Here is the output from this program:

```
Pushing items onto the stack:
9 has been pushed on the stack
3 has been pushed on the stack
7 has been pushed on the stack
2 has been pushed on the stack
The stack now contains:
2
7
3
9
Popping items from the stack:
2 has been popped off the stack
7 has been popped off the stack
3 has been popped off the stack
9 has been popped off the stack
```

## The *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection class

The array and *List*<T> types provide a way to map an integer index to an element. You specify an integer index within square brackets (for example, *[4]*), and you get back the element at index 4 (which is actually the fifth element). However, sometimes you might want to implement a mapping in which the type from which you map is not an *int* but rather some other type, such as *string*, *double*, or *Time*. In other languages, this is often called an *associative array*. The *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> class implements this functionality by internally maintaining two arrays, one for the *keys* from which you're mapping and one for the *values* to which you're mapping. When you insert a key/value pair into a *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection, it automatically tracks which key belongs to which value and makes it possible for you to retrieve the value that is associated with a specified key quickly and easily. The design of the *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> class has some important consequences:

- A *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection cannot contain duplicate keys. If you call the *Add* method to add a key that is already present in the keys array, you'll get an exception. You can, however, use the square brackets notation to add a key/value pair (as shown in the following example), without danger of an exception, even if the key has already been added; any existing value with the same key will be overwritten by the new value. You can test whether a *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection already contains a particular key by using the *ContainsKey* method.
- Internally, a *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection is a sparse data structure that operates most efficiently when it has plenty of memory with which to work. The size of a *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection in memory can grow quite quickly as you insert more elements.
- When you use a *foreach* statement to iterate through a *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection, you get back a *KeyValuePair*<TKey, TValue> item. This is a structure that contains a copy of the key and value elements of an item in the *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection, and you can access each element through the *Key* property and the *Value* properties. These elements are read-only; you cannot use them to modify the data in the *Dictionary*<TKey, TValue> collection.

Here is an example that associates the ages of members of my family with their names and then prints the information:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
...
Dictionary<string, int> ages = new Dictionary<string, int>();
// fill the Dictionary
ages.Add("John", 47);    // using the Add method
ages.Add("Diana", 46);
ages["James"] = 20;      // using array notation
ages["Francesca"] = 18;
// iterate using a foreach statement
// the iterator generates a KeyValuePair item
Console.WriteLine("The Dictionary contains:");
foreach (KeyValuePair<string, int> element in ages)
{
    string name = element.Key;
```

```
int age = element.Value;  
Console.WriteLine("Name: {0}, Age: {1}", name, age);  
}
```

Here is the output from this program:

```
The Dictionary contains:  
Name: John, Age: 47  
Name: Diana, Age: 46  
Name: James, Age: 20  
Name: Francesca, Age: 18
```

#### NOTE

The *System.Collections.Generic* namespace also includes the *SortedDictionary<TKey, TValue>* collection type. This class maintains the collection in order, sorted by the keys.

## The *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* collection class

The *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* class is very similar to the *Dictionary<TKey, TValue>* class in that you can use it to associate keys with values. The main difference is that the keys array is always sorted. (It is called a *SortedList*, after all.) It takes longer to insert data into a *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* object than a *SortedDictionary<TKey, TValue>* object in most cases, but data retrieval is often quicker (or at least as quick), and *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* class uses less memory.

When you insert a key/value pair into a *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* collection, the key is inserted into the keys array at the correct index to keep the keys array sorted. The value is then inserted into the values array at the same index. The *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* class automatically ensures that keys and values maintain synchronization, even when you add and remove elements. This means that you can insert key/value pairs into a *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* in any sequence; they are always sorted based on the value of the keys.

Like the *Dictionary<TKey, TValue>* class, a *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* collection cannot contain duplicate keys. When you use a *foreach* statement to iterate through a *SortedList<TKey, TValue>*, you receive back a *KeyValuePair<TKey, TValue>* item. However, the *KeyValuePair<TKey,*

*TValue*> items will be returned sorted by the *Key* property.

Here is the same example that associates the ages of members of my family with their names and then prints the information, but this version has been adjusted to use a *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* object rather than a *Dictionary<TKey, TValue>* collection:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
...
SortedList<string, int> ages = new SortedList<string, int>();
// fill the SortedList
ages.Add("John", 47);    // using the Add method
ages.Add("Diana", 46);
ages["James"] = 20;      // using array notation
ages["Francesca"] = 18;
// iterate using a foreach statement
// the iterator generates a KeyValuePair item
Console.WriteLine("The SortedList contains:");
foreach (KeyValuePair<string, int> element in ages)
{
    string name = element.Key;
    int age = element.Value;
    Console.WriteLine("Name: {0}, Age: {1}", name, age);
}
```

The output from this program is sorted alphabetically by the names of my family members:

```
The SortedList contains:
Name: Diana, Age: 46
Name: Francesca, Age: 18
Name: James, Age: 20
Name: John, Age: 47
```

#### IMPORTANT

The *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* type is not available in Windows Store apps. If you require this functionality, you should use the *SortedList<TKey, TValue>* type.

## The *HashSet<T>* collection class

The *HashSet<T>* class is optimized for performing set operations such as determining set membership and generating the union and intersect of sets.

You insert items into a *HashSet<T>* collection by using the *Add* method, and you delete items by using the *Remove* method. However, the real power of the *HashSet<T>* class is provided by the *IntersectWith*, *UnionWith*, and *ExceptWith* methods. These methods modify a *HashSet<T>* collection to generate a new set that either intersects with, has a union with, or does not contain the items in a specified *HashSet<T>* collection. These operations are destructive inasmuch as they overwrite the contents of the original *HashSet<T>* object with the new set of data. You can also determine whether the data in one *HashSet<T>* collection is a superset or subset of another by using the *IsSubsetOf*, *IsSupersetOf*, *IsProperSubsetOf*, and *IsProperSupersetOf* methods. These methods return a Boolean value and are nondestructive.

Internally, a *HashSet<T>* collection is held as a hash table, enabling fast lookup of items. However, a large *HashSet<T>* collection can require a significant amount of memory to operate quickly.

The following example shows how to populate a *HashSet<T>* collection and illustrates the use of the *IntersectWith* method to find data that overlaps two sets:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
...
HashSet<string> employees = new HashSet<string>(new string[]
{"Fred","Bert","Harry","John"});
HashSet<string> customers = new HashSet<string>(new string[]
{"John","Sid","Harry","Diana"});
employees.Add("James");
customers.Add("Francesca");
Console.WriteLine("Employees:");
foreach (string name in employees)
{
    Console.WriteLine(name);
}
Console.WriteLine("\nCustomers:");
foreach (string name in customers)
{
    Console.WriteLine(name);
}
Console.WriteLine("\nCustomers who are also employees:");
customers.IntersectWith(employees);
```

```
foreach (string name in customers)
{
    Console.WriteLine(name);
}
```

This code generates the following output:

```
Employees:
Fred
Bert
Harry
John
James
Customers:
John
Sid
Harry
Diana
Francesca
Customers who are also employees:
John
Harry
```

#### NOTE

The *System.Collections.Generic* namespace also provides the *SortedSet<T>* collection type, which operates in a similar manner to the *HashSet<T>* class. The primary difference, as the name implies, is that the data is maintained in a sorted order. The *SortedSet<T>* and *HashSet<T>* classes are interoperable; you can take the union of a *SortedSet<T>* collection with a *HashSet<T>* collection, for example.

## Using collection initializers

The examples in the preceding subsections have shown you how to add individual elements to a collection by using the method most appropriate to that collection (*Add* for a *List<T>* collection, *Enqueue* for a *Queue<T>* collection, *Push* for a *Stack<T>* collection, and so on). You can also initialize *some* collection types when you declare them, using a syntax similar to that supported by arrays. For example, the following statement creates and initializes the *numbers* *List<int>* object shown earlier, demonstrating an alternate technique to repeatedly calling the *Add* method:

```
List<int> numbers = new List<int>(){10, 9, 8, 7, 7, 6, 5, 10, 4, 3, 2, 1};
```

Internally, the C# compiler actually converts this initialization to a series of calls to the *Add* method. Consequently, you can use this syntax only for collections that actually support the *Add* method. (The *Stack<T>* and *Queue<T>* classes do not.) For more complex collections that take key/value pairs, such as the *Dictionary<TKey, TValue>* class, you can specify each key/value pair as an anonymous type in the initializer list, like this:

```
Dictionary<string, int> ages =  
    new Dictionary<string, int>(){{"John", 44}, {"Diana", 45}, {"James", 17},  
    {"Francesca", 15}};
```

The first item in each pair is the key, and the second is the value.

## The *Find* methods, predicates, and lambda expressions

Using the dictionary-oriented collections (*Dictionary<TKey, TValue>*, *SortedDictionary<TKey, TValue>*, and *SortedList<TKey, TValue>*), you can quickly find a value by specifying the key to search for, and you can use array notation to access the value, as you have seen in earlier examples. Other collections that support nonkeyed random access, such as the *List<T>* and *LinkedList<T>* classes, do not support array notation but instead provide the *Find* method to locate an item. For these classes, the argument to the *Find* method is a predicate that specifies the search criteria to use. The form of a predicate is a method that examines each item in the collection and returns a Boolean value indicating whether the item matches. In the case of the *Find* method, as soon as the first match is found, the corresponding item is returned. Note that the *List<T>* and *LinkedList<T>* classes also support other methods such as *FindLast*, which returns the last matching object, and the *List<T>* class additionally provides the *FindAll* method, which returns a *List<T>* collection of all matching objects.

The easiest way to specify the predicate is to use a *lambda expression*. A lambda expression is an expression that returns a method. This sounds rather odd because most expressions that you have encountered so far in C# actually return

a value. If you are familiar with functional programming languages such as Haskell, you are probably comfortable with this concept. If you are not, fear not: lambda expressions are not particularly complicated, and after you have become accustomed to a new bit of syntax, you will see that they are very useful.

#### NOTE

If you are interested in finding out more about functional programming with Haskell, visit the Haskell programming language website at <http://www.haskell.org/haskellwiki/Haskell>.

**Chapter 3** instructs that a typical method consists of four elements: a return type, a method name, a list of parameters, and a method body. A lambda expression contains two of these elements: a list of parameters and a method body. Lambda expressions do not define a method name, and the return type (if any) is inferred from the context in which the lambda expression is used. In the case of the *Find* method, the predicate processes each item in the collection in turn; the body of the predicate must examine the item and return true or false depending on whether it matches the search criteria. The example that follows shows the *Find* method (highlighted in bold) on a *List<Person>* collection, where *Person* is a struct. The *Find* method returns the first item in the list that has the *ID* property set to 3:

```
struct Person
{
    public int ID { get; set; }
    public string Name { get; set; }
    public int Age { get; set; }
}
...
// Create and populate the personnel list
List<Person> personnel = new List<Person>()
{
    new Person() { ID = 1, Name = "John", Age = 47 },
    new Person() { ID = 2, Name = "Sid", Age = 28 },
    new Person() { ID = 3, Name = "Fred", Age = 34 },
    new Person() { ID = 4, Name = "Paul", Age = 22 },
};
// Find the member of the list that has an ID of 3
Person match = personnel.Find((Person p) => { return p.ID == 3; });
Console.WriteLine("ID: {0}\nName: {1}\nAge: {2}", match.ID, match.Name, match.Age);
```



Here is the output generated by this code:

```
ID: 3  
Name: Fred  
Age: 34
```

In the call to the *Find* method, the argument  $(Person\ p) \Rightarrow \{ return\ p.ID == 3; \}$  is a lambda expression that actually does the work. It has the following syntactic items:

- A list of parameters enclosed in parentheses. As with a regular method, if the method you are defining (as in the preceding example) takes no parameters, you must still provide the parentheses. In the case of the *Find* method, the predicate is provided with each item from the collection in turn, and this item is passed as the parameter to the lambda expression.
- The  $\Rightarrow$  operator, which indicates to the C# compiler that this is a lambda expression.
- The body of the method. The example shown here is very simple, containing a single statement that returns a Boolean value indicating whether the item specified in the parameter matches the search criteria. However, a lambda expression can contain multiple statements, and you can format it in whatever way you feel is most readable. Just remember to add a semicolon after each statement, as you would in an ordinary method.

Strictly speaking, the body of a lambda expression can be a method body containing multiple statements or it can actually be a single expression. If the body of a lambda expression contains only a single expression, you can omit the braces and the semicolon (but you still need a semicolon to complete the entire statement). Additionally, if the expression takes a single parameter, you can omit the parentheses that surround the parameter. Finally, in many cases, you can actually omit the type of the parameters because the compiler can infer this information from the context from which the lambda expression is invoked. A simplified form of the *Find* statement shown previously looks like this (this statement is much easier to read and understand):

```
Person match = personnel.Find(p => p.ID == 3);
```

Lambda expressions are very powerful constructs, and you can learn more about them in [Chapter 20](#).

## Comparing arrays and collections

Here's a summary of the important differences between arrays and collections:

- An array instance has a fixed size and cannot grow or shrink. A collection can dynamically resize itself as required.
- An array can have more than one dimension. A collection is linear. However, the items in a collection can be collections themselves, so you can imitate a multidimensional array as a collection of collections.
- You store and retrieve an item in an array by using an index. Not all collections support this notion. For example, to store an item in a *List<T>* collection, you use the *Add* or *Insert* methods, and to retrieve an item, you use the *Find* method.
- Many of the collection classes provide a *ToArray* method that creates and populates an array containing the items in the collection. The items are copied to the array and are not removed from the collection. Additionally, these collections provide constructors that can populate a collection directly from an array.

## Using collection classes to play cards

In the next exercise, you will convert the card game that is developed in [Chapter 10](#) to use collections rather than arrays.

Use collections to implement a card game

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Cards project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 18\Windows X\Cards folder in your Documents folder.

This project contains an updated version of the project from [Chapter 10](#) that deals hands of cards by using arrays. The *PlayingCard* class is modified to expose the value and suit of a card as read-only properties.

3. Display the *Pack.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the following *using* directive to the top of the file:

```
using System.Collections.Generic;
```

4. In the *Pack* class, change the definition of the *cardPack* two-dimensional array to a *Dictionary<Suit, List< PlayingCard>>* object, as shown here in bold:

```
class Pack
{
    ...
    private Dictionary<Suit, List<PlayingCard>> cardPack;
    ...
}
```

The original application used a two-dimensional array for representing a pack of cards. This code replaces the array with a *Dictionary*, where the key specifies the suit, and the value is a list of cards in that suit.

5. Locate the *Pack* constructor. Modify the first statement in this constructor to instantiate the *cardPack* variable as a new *Dictionary* collection rather than an array, as shown here in bold:

```
public Pack()
{
    this.cardPack = new Dictionary<Suit, List<PlayingCard>>(NumSuits);
    ...
}
```

Although a *Dictionary* collection will resize itself automatically as items are added, if the collection is unlikely to change in size, you can specify an initial size when you instantiate it. This helps to optimize the memory allocation, although the *Dictionary* collection can still grow if this size is exceeded. In this case, the *Dictionary* collection will contain a collection of

four lists (one list for each suit), so it is allocated space for four items (*NumSuits* is a constant with the value 4).

6. In the outer *for* loop, declare a *List<PlayingCard>* collection object called *cardsInSuit* that is big enough to hold the number of cards in each suit (use the *CardsPerSuit* constant), as follows in bold:

```
public Pack()
{
    this.cardPack = new Dictionary<Suit, List<PlayingCard>>(NumSuits);
    for (Suit suit = Suit.Clubs; suit <= Suit.Spades; suit++)
    {
        List<PlayingCard> cardsInSuit = new List<PlayingCard>(CardsPerSuit);
        for (Value value = Value.Two; value <= Value.Ace; value++)
        {
            ...
        }
    }
}
```

7. Change the code in the inner *for* loop to add new *PlayingCard* objects to this collection rather than the array, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
for (Suit suit = Suit.Clubs; suit <= Suit.Spades; suit++)
{
    List<PlayingCard> cardsInSuit = new List<PlayingCard>(CardsPerSuit);
    for (Value value = Value.Two; value <= Value.Ace; value++)
    {
        cardsInSuit.Add(new PlayingCard(suit, value));
    }
}
```

8. After the inner *for* loop, add the *List* object to the *cardPack Dictionary* collection, specifying the value of the *suit* variable as the key to this item:

```
for (Suit suit = Suit.Clubs; suit <= Suit.Spades; suit++)
{
    List<PlayingCard> cardsInSuit = new List<PlayingCard>(CardsPerSuit);
    for (Value value = Value.Two; value <= Value.Ace; value++)
    {
        cardsInSuit.Add(new PlayingCard(suit, value));
    }
}
```

```

    }
    this.cardPack.Add(suit, cardsInSuit);
}

```

9. Find the *DealCardFromPack* method.

This method picks a card at random from the pack, removes the card from the pack, and returns this card. The logic for selecting the card does not require any changes, but the statements at the end of the method that retrieve the card from the array must be updated to use the *Dictionary* collection, instead. Additionally, the code that removes the card from the array (it has now been dealt) must be modified; you need to search for the card in the list and then remove it from the list. To locate the card, use the *Find* method and specify a predicate that finds a card with the matching value. The parameter to the predicate should be a *PlayingCard* object (the list contains *PlayingCard* items).

The updated statements occur after the closing brace of the second *while* loop, as shown in bold in the following code:

```

public PlayingCard DealCardFromPack()
{
    Suit suit = (Suit)randomCardSelector.Next(NumSuits);
    while (this.IsSuitEmpty(suit))
    {
        suit = (Suit)randomCardSelector.Next(NumSuits);
    }
    Value value = (Value)randomCardSelector.Next(CardsPerSuit);
    while (this.IsCardAlreadyDealt(suit, value))
    {
        value = (Value)randomCardSelector.Next(CardsPerSuit);
    }
    List<PlayingCard> cardsInSuit = this.cardPack[suit];
    PlayingCard card = cardsInSuit.Find(c => c.CardValue == value);
    cardsInSuit.Remove(card);
    return card;
}

```

10. Locate the *IsCardAlreadyDealt* method.

This method determines whether a card has already been dealt by checking whether the corresponding element in the array has been set to *null*. You

need to modify this method to determine whether a card with the specified value is present in the list for the suit in the *cardPack Dictionary* collection.

To determine whether an item exists in a *List<T>* collection, you use the *Exists* method. This method is similar to *Find* inasmuch as it takes a predicate as its argument. The predicate is passed each item from the collection in turn, and it should return true if the item matches some specified criteria, and false otherwise. In this case, the *List<T>* collection holds *PlayingCard* objects, and the criteria for the *Exists* predicate should return true if it is passed a *PlayingCard* item with a suit and value that matches the parameters passed to the *IsCardAlreadyDealt* method.

Update the method, as shown in the following example, in bold:

```
private bool IsCardAlreadyDealt(Suit suit, Value value)
{
    List<PlayingCard> cardsInSuit = this.cardPack[suit];
    return (!cardsInSuit.Exists(c => c.CardSuit == suit && c.CardValue ==
value));
}
```

11. Display the Hand.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using System.Collections.Generic;
```

12. The *Hand* class currently uses an array called *cards* to hold the playing cards for the hand. Modify the definition of the *cards* variable to be a *List<PlayingCard>* collection, as shown here in bold:

```
class Hand
{
    public const int HandSize = 13;
    private List<PlayingCard> cards = new List<PlayingCard>(HandSize);
    ...
}
```

13. Find the *AddCardToHand* method.

This method currently checks to see whether the hand is full; if it is not, it

adds the card provided as the parameter to the *cards* array at the index specified by the *playingCardCount* variable.

Update this method to use the *Add* method of the *List<PlayingCard>* collection, instead.

This change also removes the need to explicitly keep track of how many cards the collection holds because you can use the *Count* property of the *cards* collection, instead. Therefore, remove the *playingCardCount* variable from the class and modify the *if* statement that checks whether the hand is full to reference the *Count* property of the *cards* collection.

The completed method should look like this, with the changes highlighted in bold:

```
public void AddCardToHand(PlayingCard cardDealt)
{
    if (this.cards.Count >= HandSize)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException("Too many cards");
    }
    this.cards.Add(cardDealt);
}
```

14. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
15. When the Card Game form appears, click Deal.

#### NOTE

Remember that in the Windows Store apps version of this application, the Deal button is located on the app bar.

Verify that the cards are dealt and that the populated hands appear as before. Click Deal again to generate another random set of hands.

The following image shows the Windows 8.1 version of the application:

## Card Game

North	South	East	West
Eight of Diamonds Seven of Clubs Ten of Spades Ace of Spades King of Diamonds Four of Spades Ten of Diamonds King of Clubs Jack of Spades Ten of Hearts Nine of Hearts Ace of Diamonds Five of Spades	Nine of Spades Two of Diamonds Two of Spades Seven of Spades Six of Diamonds Eight of Hearts Six of Hearts Three of Clubs Four of Diamonds Three of Diamonds Seven of Hearts Queen of Clubs Five of Clubs	Jack of Hearts Seven of Diamonds Two of Clubs Six of Spades Three of Spades King of Spades Queen of Spades King of Hearts Three of Hearts Four of Hearts Two of Hearts Five of Diamonds Eight of Spades	Ace of Hearts Five of Hearts Ten of Clubs Nine of Diamonds Jack of Clubs Queen of Diamonds Queen of Hearts Four of Clubs Ace of Clubs Nine of Clubs Jack of Diamonds Six of Clubs Eight of Clubs

Return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to create and use arrays to manipulate sets of data. You also saw how to use some of the common collection classes to store and access data.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 19](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Create a new collection	Use the constructor for the collection class. For example:  <pre>List&lt;PlayingCard&gt; cards = new List&lt;PlayingCard&gt;();</pre>



Add an item to a collection	<p>Use the <i>Add</i> or <i>Insert</i> methods (as appropriate) for lists, hash sets, and dictionary-oriented collections. Use the <i>Enqueue</i> method for <i>Queue&lt;T&gt;</i> collections. Use the <i>Push</i> method for <i>Stack&lt;T&gt;</i> collections. For example:</p> <pre> HashSet&lt;string&gt; employees = new HashSet&lt;string&gt;(); employees.Add("John"); ... LinkedList&lt;int&gt; data = new LinkedList&lt;int&gt;(); data.AddFirst(101); ... Stack&lt;int&gt; numbers = new Stack&lt;int&gt;(); numbers.Push(99); </pre>
Remove an item from a collection	<p>Use the <i>Remove</i> method for lists, hash sets, and dictionary-oriented collections. Use the <i>Dequeue</i> method for <i>Queue&lt;T&gt;</i> collections. Use the <i>Pop</i> method for <i>Stack&lt;T&gt;</i> collections. For example:</p> <pre> HashSet&lt;string&gt; employees = new HashSet&lt;string&gt;(); employees.Remove("John"); ... LinkedList&lt;int&gt; data = new LinkedList&lt;int&gt;(); data.Remove(101); ... Stack&lt;int&gt; numbers = new Stack&lt;int&gt;(); int item = numbers.Pop(); </pre>
Find the number of elements in a collection	<p>Use the <i>Count</i> property. For example:</p> <pre> List&lt;PlayingCard&gt; cards = new List&lt;PlayingCard&gt;(); ... int noOfCards = cards.Count; </pre>
Locate an item in a collection	<p>For dictionary-oriented collections, use array notation. For lists, use the <i>Find</i> methods. For example:</p> <pre> Dictionary&lt;string, int&gt; ages =     new Dictionary&lt;string, int&gt;(); ... </pre>

	<pre> ages.Add("John", 41); int johnsAge = ages["John"]; ... List&lt;Person&gt; personnel = new List&lt;Person&gt;(); Person match = personnel.Find(p =&gt; p.ID == 3); </pre> <p>Note: The <i>Stack&lt;T&gt;</i>, <i>Queue&lt;T&gt;</i>, and hash set collection classes do not support searching, although you can test for membership of an item in a hash set by using the <i>Contains</i> method.</p>
Iterate through the elements of a collection	<p>Use a <i>for</i> statement or a <i>foreach</i> statement. For example:</p> <pre> LinkedList&lt;int&gt; numbers = new LinkedList&lt;int&gt;(); ... for (LinkedListNode&lt;int&gt; node = numbers.First;     node != null; node = node.Next) {     int number = node.Value;     Console.WriteLine(number); } ... foreach (int number in numbers) {     Console.WriteLine(number); } </pre>

# Chapter 19. Enumerating collections

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Enumerating the elements in a collection
- Implementing an enumerator by using an iterator
- Provide additional iterators that can step through the elements of a collection in different sequences.

Chapter 10 and Chapter 18 show you about arrays and collection classes for holding sequences or sets of data. Chapter 10 also details the *foreach* statement that you can use for stepping through, or iterating over, the elements in a collection. In these chapters, you use the *foreach* statement as a quick and convenient way of accessing the contents of an array or collection, but now it is time to learn a little more about how this statement actually works. This topic becomes important when you define your own collection classes, and this chapter describes how you can make collections enumerable.

## Enumerating the elements in a collection

Chapter 10 presents an example of using the *foreach* statement to list the items in a simple array. The code looks like this:

```
int[] pins = { 9, 3, 7, 2 };  
foreach (int pin in pins)  
{  
    Console.WriteLine(pin);  
}
```

The *foreach* construct provides an elegant mechanism that greatly simplifies the

code you need to write, but it can be exercised only under certain circumstances—you can use *foreach* only to step through an *enumerable* collection.

So, what exactly is an enumerable collection? The quick answer is that it is a collection that implements the *System.Collections.IEnumerable* interface.

#### NOTE

Remember that all arrays in C# are actually instances of the *System.Array* class. The *System.Array* class is a collection class that implements the *IEnumerable* interface.

The *IEnumerable* interface contains a single method called *GetEnumerator*:

```
IEnumerator GetEnumerator();
```

The *GetEnumerator* method should return an enumerator object that implements the *System.Collections.IEnumerator* interface. The enumerator object is used for stepping through (enumerating) the elements of the collection. The *IEnumerator* interface specifies the following property and methods:

```
object Current { get; }  
bool MoveNext();  
void Reset();
```

Think of an enumerator as a pointer indicating elements in a list. Initially, the pointer points *before* the first element. You call the *MoveNext* method to move the pointer down to the next (first) item in the list; the *MoveNext* method should return *true* if there actually is another item and *false* if there isn't. You use the *Current* property to access the item currently pointed to, and you use the *Reset* method to return the pointer back to *before* the first item in the list. By creating an enumerator by using the *GetEnumerator* method of a collection and repeatedly calling the *MoveNext* method and retrieving the value of the *Current* property by using the enumerator, you can move forward through the elements of a collection one item at a time. This is exactly what the *foreach* statement does. So, if you want to create your own enumerable collection class, you must implement the *IEnumerable* interface in your collection class and also provide an implementation of the *IEnumerator* interface to be returned by the

*GetEnumerator* method of the collection class.

#### IMPORTANT

At first glance, it is easy to confuse the *IEnumerable* and *IEnumerator* interfaces because of the similarity of their names. Be certain to not mix them up.

If you are observant, you will have noticed that the *Current* property of the *IEnumerator* interface exhibits non-type-safe behavior in that it returns an *object* rather than a specific type. However, you should be pleased to know that the Microsoft .NET Framework class library also provides the generic *IEnumerator<T>* interface, which has a *Current* property that returns a *T*, instead. Likewise, there is also an *IEnumerable<T>* interface containing a *GetEnumerator* method that returns an *Enumerator<T>* object. Both of these interfaces are defined in the *System.Collections.Generic* namespace, and if you are building applications for the .NET Framework version 2.0 or later, you should make use of these generic interfaces when defining enumerable collections rather than using the nongeneric version.

#### NOTE

The generic *IEnumerator<T>* interface has some further differences from the nongeneric *IEnumerator* interface: it does not contain a *Reset* method but extends the *IDisposable* interface.

## Manually implementing an enumerator

In the next exercise, you will define a class that implements the generic *IEnumerator<T>* interface and create an enumerator for the binary tree class that is demonstrated in [Chapter 17](#).

[Chapter 17](#) illustrates how easy it is to traverse a binary tree and display its contents. You would therefore be inclined to think that defining an enumerator that retrieves each element in a binary tree in the same order would be a simple matter. Sadly, you would be mistaken. The main problem is that when defining an enumerator you need to remember where you are in the structure so that

subsequent calls to the *MoveNext* method can update the position appropriately. Recursive algorithms, such as that used when walking a binary tree, do not lend themselves to maintaining state information between method calls in an easily accessible manner. For this reason, you will first preprocess the data in the binary tree into a more amenable data structure (a queue) and actually enumerate this data structure instead. Of course, this deviousness is hidden from the user iterating through the elements of the binary tree!

Create the *TreeEnumerator* class

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the BinaryTree solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 19\Windows X\BinaryTree folder in your Documents folder. This solution contains a working copy of the BinaryTree project you created in **Chapter 17**. You will add a new class to this project, to implement the enumerator for the *BinaryTree* class.
3. In Solution Explorer, click the BinaryTree project. On the Project menu, click Add Class to open the Add New Item – BinaryTree dialog box. In the middle pane, select the Class template, type **TreeEnumerator.cs** in the Name box, and then click Add.

The *TreeEnumerator* class generates an enumerator for a *Tree<TItem>* object. To ensure that the class is type safe, you must provide a type parameter and implement the *IEnumerator<T>* interface. Also, the type parameter must be a valid type for the *Tree<TItem>* object that the class enumerates, so it must be constrained to implement the *IComparable<TItem>* interface (the *BinaryTree* class requires that items in the tree provide a means to allow them to be compared, for sorting purposes).

4. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the *TreeEnumerator.cs* file, modify the definition of the *TreeEnumerator* class to satisfy these requirements, as shown in bold in the following example:

```
class TreeEnumerator<TItem> : IEnumerator<TItem> where TItem :  
IComparable<TItem>  
{  
}
```

5. Add the three private variables shown in the following code in bold to the *TreeEnumerator* <*TItem*> class:

```
class TreeEnumerator<TItem> : IEnumerator<TItem> where TItem :  
    IComparable<TItem>  
{  
    private Tree<TItem> currentData = null;  
    private TItem currentItem = default(TItem);  
    private Queue<TItem> enumData = null;  
}
```

The *currentData* variable will be used to hold a reference to the tree being enumerated, and the *currentItem* variable will hold the value returned by the *Current* property. You will populate the *enumData* queue with the values extracted from the nodes in the tree, and the *MoveNext* method will return each item from this queue in turn. The *default* keyword is explained in the section “Initializing a variable defined with a type parameter” later in this chapter.

6. Add a constructor that takes a single *Tree*<*TItem*> parameter called *data* to the *TreeEnumerator*<*TItem*> class. In the body of the constructor, add a statement that initializes the *currentData* variable to *data*:

```
class TreeEnumerator<TItem> : IEnumerator<TItem> where TItem :  
    IComparable<TItem>  
{  
    ...  
    public TreeEnumerator(Tree<TItem> data)  
    {  
        this.currentData = data;  
    }  
}
```

7. Add the following private method called *populate* to the *TreeEnumerator*<*TItem*> class, immediately after the constructor:

```
class TreeEnumerator<TItem> : IEnumerator<TItem> where TItem :  
    IComparable<TItem>  
{  
    ...
```

```

private void populate(Queue<TItem> enumQueue, Tree<TItem> tree)
{
    if (tree.LeftTree != null)
    {
        populate(enumQueue, tree.LeftTree);
    }
    enumQueue.Enqueue(tree.NodeData);
    if (tree.RightTree != null)
    {
        populate(enumQueue, tree.RightTree);
    }
}
}

```

This method walks the binary tree, adding the data it contains to the queue. The algorithm used is similar to that used by the *WalkTree* method in the *Tree<TItem>* class, which is described in [Chapter 17](#). The main difference is that rather than the method appending *NodeData* values to a string, it stores these values in the queue.

8. Return to the definition of the *TreeEnumerator<TItem>* class. In the class declaration, right-click anywhere in the text *IEnumerator<TItem>*. On the shortcut menu that appears, point to Implement Interface, and then click Implement Interface Explicitly.

This action generates stubs for the methods in the *IEnumerator<TItem>* interface and the *IEnumerator* interface, and adds them to the end of the class. It also generates the *Dispose* method for the *IDisposable* interface.

#### NOTE

The *IEnumerator<TItem>* interface inherits from the *IEnumerator* and *IDisposable* interfaces, which is why their methods also appear. In fact, the only item that belongs to the *IEnumerator<TItem>* interface is the generic *Current* property. The *MoveNext* and *Reset* methods belong to the nongeneric *IEnumerator* interface. [Chapter 14](#) describes the *IDisposable* interface.

9. Examine the code that has been generated.

The bodies of the properties and methods contain a default implementation that simply throws a *NotImplementedException* exception. You will



replace this code with a real implementation in the following steps.

10. Update the body of the *MoveNext* method with the code shown in bold here:

```
bool System.Collections.IEnumerator.MoveNext()
{
    if (this.enumData == null)
    {
        this.enumData = new Queue<TItem>();
        populate(this.enumData, this.currentData);
    }
    if (this.enumData.Count > 0)
    {
        this.currentItem = this.enumData.Dequeue();
        return true;
    }
    return false;
}
```

The purpose of the *MoveNext* method of an enumerator is actually twofold. The first time it is called, it should initialize the data used by the enumerator and advance to the first piece of data to be returned. (Prior to *MoveNext* being called for the first time, the value returned by the *Current* property is undefined and should result in an exception.) In this case, the initialization process consists of instantiating the queue and then calling the *populate* method to fill the queue with data extracted from the tree.

Subsequent calls to the *MoveNext* method should just move through data items until there are no more left, dequeuing items until the queue is empty, as in this example. It is important to keep in mind that *MoveNext* does not actually return data items—that is the purpose of the *Current* property. All *MoveNext* does is update the internal state in the enumerator (that is, the value of the *currentItem* variable is set to the data item extracted from the queue) for use by the *Current* property, returning *true* if there is a next value and *false* otherwise.

11. Modify the definition of the *get* accessor of the generic *Current* property as follows in bold:

```

TItem IEnumerator<TItem>.Current
{
    get
    {
        if (this.enumData == null)
        {
            throw new InvalidOperationException("Use MoveNext before calling
Current");
        }
        return this.currentItem;
    }
}

```

#### IMPORTANT

Be sure to add the code to the correct implementation of the *Current* property. Leave the nongeneric version, *System.Collections.IEnumerator.Current*, with its default implementation that throws a *NotImplementedException* exception.

The *Current* property examines the *enumData* variable to ensure that *MoveNext* has been called. (This variable will be *null* prior to the first call to *MoveNext*.) If this is not the case, the property throws an *InvalidOperationException*—this is the conventional mechanism used by .NET Framework applications to indicate that an operation cannot be performed in the current state. If *MoveNext* has been called beforehand, it will have updated the *currentItem* variable, so all the *Current* property needs to do is return the value in this variable.

12. Locate the *IDisposable.Dispose* method. Comment out the *throw new NotImplementedException();* statement, as shown in bold in the code that follows. The enumerator does not use any resources that require explicit disposal, so this method does not need to do anything. It must still be present, however. For more information about the *Dispose* method, refer to [Chapter 14](#).

```

void IDisposable.Dispose()
{
    // throw new NotImplementedException();
}

```

13. Build the solution, and correct any errors that are reported.

INITIALIZING A VARIABLE DEFINED WITH A TYPE PARAMETER YOU SHOULD HAVE NOTICED THAT THE STATEMENT THAT DEFINES AND INITIALIZES THE *CURRENTITEM* VARIABLE USES THE *DEFAULT* KEYWORD. THE *CURRENTITEM* VARIABLE IS DEFINED BY USING THE TYPE PARAMETER *TITEM*. WHEN THE PROGRAM IS WRITTEN AND COMPILED, THE ACTUAL TYPE THAT WILL BE SUBSTITUTED FOR *TITEM* MIGHT NOT BE KNOWN—THIS ISSUE IS RESOLVED ONLY WHEN THE CODE IS EXECUTED. THIS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO SPECIFY HOW THE VARIABLE SHOULD BE INITIALIZED. THE TEMPTATION IS TO SET IT TO *NULL*. HOWEVER, IF THE TYPE SUBSTITUTED FOR *TITEM* IS A VALUE TYPE, THIS IS AN ILLEGAL ASSIGNMENT. (YOU CANNOT SET VALUE TYPES TO *NULL*, ONLY REFERENCE TYPES.) SIMILARLY, IF YOU SET IT TO *0* WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT THE TYPE WILL BE NUMERIC, THIS WILL BE ILLEGAL IF THE TYPE USED IS ACTUALLY A REFERENCE TYPE. THERE ARE OTHER POSSIBILITIES, AS WELL—*TITEM* COULD BE A *BOOLEAN*, FOR EXAMPLE. THE *DEFAULT* KEYWORD SOLVES THIS PROBLEM. THE VALUE USED TO INITIALIZE THE VARIABLE WILL BE DETERMINED WHEN THE STATEMENT IS EXECUTED. IF *TITEM* IS A REFERENCE TYPE, *DEFAULT(TITEM)* RETURNS *NULL*; IF *TITEM* IS NUMERIC, *DEFAULT(TITEM)* RETURNS *0*; IF *TITEM* IS A *BOOLEAN*, *DEFAULT(TITEM)* RETURNS *FALSE*. IF *TITEM* IS A *STRUCT*, THE INDIVIDUAL FIELDS IN THE *STRUCT* ARE INITIALIZED IN THE SAME WAY. (REFERENCE FIELDS ARE SET TO *NULL*, NUMERIC FIELDS ARE SET TO *0*, AND *BOOLEAN* FIELDS ARE SET TO *FALSE*.)

## Implementing the *IEnumerable* interface

In the following exercise, you will modify the binary tree class to implement the *IEnumerable<T>* interface. The *GetEnumerator* method will return a *TreeEnumerator<TItem>* object.

Implement the *IEnumerable<TItem>* interface in the *Tree<TItem>* class

1. In Solution Explorer, double-click the file *Tree.cs* to display the *Tree<TItem>* class in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Modify the definition of the *Tree<TItem>* class so that it implements the *IEnumerable<TItem>* interface, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
public class Tree<TItem> : IEnumerable<TItem> where TItem : IComparable<TItem>
```

Notice that constraints are always placed at the end of the class definition.

3. Right-click the *IEnumerable<TItem>* interface in the class definition. On the shortcut menu that appears, point to Implement Interface, and then click Implement Interface Explicitly.

This action generates implementations of the *IEnumerable<TItem>.GetEnumerator* and *IEnumerable.GetEnumerator* methods and adds them to the class. The nongeneric *IEnumerable* interface method is implemented because the generic *IEnumerable<TItem>* interface inherits from *IEnumerable*.

4. Locate the generic *IEnumerable<TItem>.GetEnumerator* method near the end of the class. Modify the body of the *GetEnumerator()* method, replacing the existing *throw* statement, as shown in bold in the following example:

```
IEnumerator<TItem> IEnumerable<TItem>.GetEnumerator()  
{  
    return new TreeEnumerator<TItem>(this);  
}
```

The purpose of the *GetEnumerator* method is to construct an enumerator object for iterating through the collection. In this case, all you need to do is build a new *TreeEnumerator<TItem>* object by using the data in the tree.

5. Build the solution, correct any errors that are reported, and rebuild the solution if necessary.

You will now test the modified *Tree<TItem>* class by using a *foreach* statement to iterate through a binary tree and display its contents.

Test the enumerator

1. In Solution Explorer, right-click the BinaryTree solution, point to Add, and then click New Project. Add a new project by using the Console Application template. Name the project **EnumeratorTest**, set the Location to \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 19\Windows X\BinaryTree in your Documents folder, and then click OK.

NOTE

Ensure that you select the Console Application template from the list of Visual C# templates. Sometimes the Add New Project dialog box displays the templates for Visual Basic or C++ by default.

2. Right-click the `EnumeratorTest` project in Solution Explorer, and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click `Set as StartUp Project`.
3. On the `Project` menu, click `Add Reference`. In the `Add Reference` dialog box, in the left pane click `Solution`; in the middle pane, select the `BinaryTree` project, and then click `OK`.

The `BinaryTree` assembly appears in the list of references for the `EnumeratorTest` project in Solution Explorer.

4. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the *Program* class, add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using BinaryTree;
```

5. Add the statements shown in bold in the code that follows to the *Main* method. These statements create and populate a binary tree of integers:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Tree<int> tree1 = new Tree<int>(10);
    tree1.Insert(5);
    tree1.Insert(11);
    tree1.Insert(5);
    tree1.Insert(-12);
    tree1.Insert(15);
    tree1.Insert(0);
    tree1.Insert(14);
    tree1.Insert(-8);
    tree1.Insert(10);
}
```

6. Add a *foreach* statement, as follows in bold, that enumerates the contents of the tree and displays the results:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
```

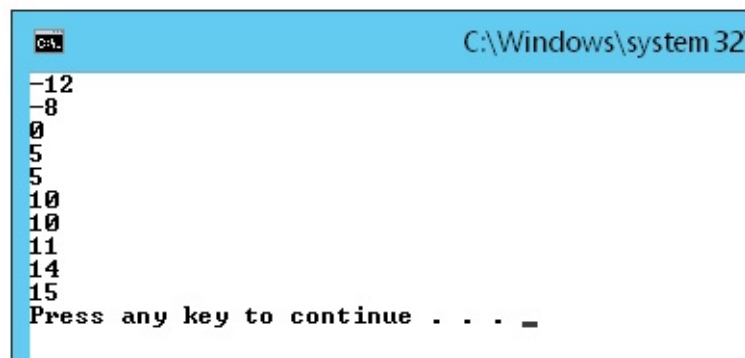
```

{
    ...
    foreach (int item in tree1)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(item);
    }
}

```

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program runs and displays the values in the following sequence: -12, -8, 0, 5, 5, 10, 10, 11, 14, 15



```

C:\Windows\system32
-12
-8
0
5
5
10
10
11
14
15
Press any key to continue . . . _

```

8. Press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Implementing an enumerator by using an iterator

As you can see, the process of making a collection enumerable can become complex and potentially error-prone. To make life easier, C# provides iterators that can automate much of this process.

An *iterator* is a block of code that yields an ordered sequence of values. An iterator is not actually a member of an enumerable class; rather, it specifies the sequence that an enumerator should use for returning its values. In other words, an iterator is just a description of the enumeration sequence that the C# compiler can use for creating its own enumerator. This concept requires a little thought to understand properly, so consider the following simple example.

### A simple iterator

The following *BasicCollection*<T> class illustrates the principles of implementing an iterator. The class uses a *List*<T> object for holding data and provides the *FillList* method for populating this list. Notice also that the *BasicCollection*<T> class implements the *IEnumerable*<T> interface. The *GetEnumerator* method is implemented by using an iterator:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.Collections;
class BasicCollection<T> : IEnumerable<T>
{
    private List<T> data = new List<T>();
    public void FillList(params T [] items)
    {
        foreach (var datum in items)
        {
            data.Add(datum);
        }
    }
    IEnumerator<T> IEnumerable<T>.GetEnumerator()
    {
        foreach (var datum in data)
        {
            yield return datum;
        }
    }
    IEnumerator IEnumerable.GetEnumerator()
    {
        // Not implemented in this example
        throw new NotImplementedException();
    }
}
```

The *GetEnumerator* method appears to be straightforward, but it warrants closer examination. The first thing you should notice is that it doesn't appear to return an *IEnumerator*<T> type. Instead, it loops through the items in the *data* array, returning each item in turn. The key point is the use of the *yield* keyword. The *yield* keyword indicates the value that should be returned by each iteration. If it helps, you can think of the *yield* statement as calling a temporary halt to the method, passing back a value to the caller. When the caller needs the next value, the *GetEnumerator* method continues at the point at which it left off, looping around and then yielding the next value. Eventually, the data is exhausted, the

loop finishes, and the *GetEnumerator* method terminates. At this point, the iteration is complete.

Remember that this is not a normal method in the usual sense. The code in the *GetEnumerator* method defines an *iterator*. The compiler uses this code to generate an implementation of the *IEnumerator<T>* class containing a *Current* method and a *MoveNext* method. This implementation exactly matches the functionality specified by the *GetEnumerator* method. You don't actually get to see this generated code (unless you decompile the assembly containing the compiled code), but that is a small price to pay for the convenience and reduction in code that you need to write. You can invoke the enumerator generated by the iterator in the usual manner, as shown in the following block of code, which displays the words in the first line of the poem "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll:

```
BasicCollection<string> bc = new BasicCollection<string>();
bc.FillList("Twas", "brillig", "and", "the", "slithy", "toves");
foreach (string word in bc)
{
    Console.WriteLine(word);
}
```

This code simply outputs the contents of the *bc* object in this order: Twas, brillig, and, the, slithy, toves

If you want to provide alternative iteration mechanisms presenting the data in a different sequence, you can implement additional properties that implement the *IEnumerable* interface and that use an iterator for returning data. For example, the *Reverse* property of the *BasicCollection<T>* class, shown here, emits the data in the list in reverse order:

```
class BasicCollection<T> : IEnumerable<T>
{
    ...
    public IEnumerable<T> Reverse
    {
        get
        {
            for (int i = data.Count - 1; i >= 0; i--)
            {
                yield return data[i];
            }
        }
    }
}
```



```

    }
}
}

```

You can invoke this property as follows:

```

BasicCollection<string> bc = new BasicCollection<string>();
bc.FillList("Twas", "brillig", "and", "the", "slithy", "toves");
foreach (string word in bc.Reverse)
{
    Console.WriteLine(word);
}

```

This code outputs the contents of the *bc* object in reverse order: toves, slithy, the, and, brillig, Twas

## Defining an enumerator for the *Tree<TItem>* class by using an iterator

In the next exercise, you will implement the enumerator for the *Tree<TItem>* class by using an iterator. Unlike the preceding set of exercises, which required the data in the tree to be preprocessed into a queue by the *MoveNext* method, you can define an iterator that traverses the tree by using the more naturally recursive mechanism, similar to the *WalkTree* method discussed in [Chapter 17](#).

Add an enumerator to the *Tree<TItem>* class

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, open the BinaryTree solution located, which is in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 19\Windows X\IteratorBinaryTree folder in your Documents folder. This solution contains another copy of the BinaryTree project you created in [Chapter 17](#).
2. Open the file Tree.cs in the Code and Text Editor window. Modify the definition of the *Tree<TItem>* class so that it implements the *IEnumerable<TItem>* interface, as shown in bold in the following example:

```

public class Tree<TItem> : IEnumerable<TItem> where TItem : IComparable<TItem>
{
    ...
}

```

```
}
```

3. Right-click the *IEnumerable<TItem>* interface in the class definition. On the shortcut menu that appears, point to Implement Interface, and then click Implement Interface Explicitly.

The *IEnumerable<TItem>.GetEnumerator* and *IEnumerable.GetEnumerator* methods are added to the end of the class.

4. Locate the generic *IEnumerable<TItem>.GetEnumerator* method. Replace the contents of the *GetEnumerator* method, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
IEnumerator<TItem> IEnumerable<TItem>.GetEnumerator()  
{  
    if (this.LeftTree != null)  
    {  
        foreach (TItem item in this.LeftTree)  
        {  
            yield return item;  
        }  
    }  
  
    yield return this.NodeData;  
    if (this.RightTree != null)  
    {  
        foreach (TItem item in this.RightTree)  
        {  
            yield return item;  
        }  
    }  
}
```

It might not be obvious at first glance, but this code follows the same recursive algorithm that you used in **Chapter 17** for listing the contents of a binary tree. If *LeftTree* is not empty, the first *foreach* statement implicitly calls the *GetEnumerator* method (which you are currently defining) over it. This process continues until a node is found that has no left subtree. At this point, the value in the *NodeData* property is yielded, and the right subtree is examined in the same way. When the right subtree is exhausted, the process unwinds to the parent node, outputting the parent's *NodeData*

property and examining the right subtree of the parent. This course of action continues until the entire tree has been enumerated and all the nodes have been output.

Test the new enumerator

1. In Solution Explorer, right-click the BinaryTree solution, point to Add, and then click Existing Project. In the Add Existing Project dialog box, move to the folder \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 19\Windows X\BinaryTree\EnumeratorTest, select the EnumeratorTest project file, and then click Open.

This is the project that you created to test the enumerator you developed manually earlier in this chapter.

2. Right-click the EnumeratorTest project in Solution Explorer, and then, on the shortcut menu that appears click Set As StartUp Project.
3. In Solution Explorer, expand the References folder for the EnumeratorTest project. Right-click the BinaryTree reference and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click Remove.
4. On the Project menu, click Add Reference. In the Add Reference dialog box, in the left pane click Solution, in the middle pane select the BinaryTree project, and then click OK.

#### NOTE

These two steps ensure that the EnumeratorTest project references the correct version of the *BinaryTree* assembly. It should use the assembly that implements the enumerator by using the iterator rather than the version created in the previous set of exercises in this chapter.

5. Display the Program.cs file for the EnumeratorTest project in the Code and Text Editor window. Review the *Main* method in the Program.cs file. Recall from testing the earlier enumerator that this method instantiates a *Tree<int>* object, fills it with some data, and then uses a *foreach* statement to display its contents.

6. Build the solution, correcting any errors if necessary.

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program runs and displays the values in the same sequence as before.

–12, –8, 0, 5, 5, 10, 10, 11, 14, 15

8. Press Enter and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to implement the *IEnumerable<T>* and *IEnumerator<T>* interfaces with a collection class to enable applications to iterate through the items in the collection. You also saw how to implement an enumerator by using an iterator.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 20](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

To	Do this
Make a collection class enumerable, allowing it to support the <i>foreach</i> construct	Implement the <i>IEnumerable</i> interface and provide a <i>GetEnumerator</i> method that returns an <i>IEnumerator</i> object. For example:  <pre>public class Tree&lt;TItem&gt; : IEnumerable&lt;TItem&gt; {     ...     IEnumerator&lt;TItem&gt; GetEnumerator()     {         ...     } }</pre>
Implement an enumerator	Define an enumerator class that implements the <i>IEnumerator</i>

without using an iterator	<p>interface and that provides the <i>Current</i> property and the <i>MoveNext</i> method (and optionally the <i>Reset</i> method). For example:</p> <pre> public class TreeEnumerator&lt;TItem&gt; :     IEnumerator&lt;TItem&gt; {     ...     TItem Current     {         get         {             ...         }     }     bool MoveNext()     {         ...     } } </pre>
Define an enumerator by using an iterator	<p>Implement the enumerator to indicate which items should be returned (using the <i>yield</i> statement) and in which order. For example:</p> <pre> IEnumerator&lt;TItem&gt; GetEnumerator() {     for (...)     {         yield return ...     } } </pre>

# Chapter 20. Decoupling application logic and handling events

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **Understanding delegates**
- Create an instance of a delegate to refer to a specific method.
- Call a method through a delegate.
- **Lambda expressions and delegates**
- **Declaring an event**
- Handle an event by using a delegate.
- **Raising an event**

Many of the examples and exercises in this book have placed great emphasis on the careful definition of classes and structures to enforce encapsulation. In this way, the implementation of the methods in these types can change without unduly affecting the applications that use them. However, sometimes it is not always possible or desirable to encapsulate the entire functionality of a type. For example, the logic for a method in a class might depend upon which component or application invoked this method; it might need to perform some application or component-specific processing as part of its operation. The problem is that when you build such a class and implement its methods, you might not know which applications and components are going to use it, and you need to avoid introducing dependencies into your code that might restrict the use of your class. Delegates provide the ideal solution, making it possible for you to fully decouple

the application logic in your methods from the applications that invoke them. Events in C# support a related scenario. Much of the code you have written in the various exercises in this book assumed that statements execute sequentially. Although this is the most common case, you will find that it is sometimes necessary to interrupt the current flow of execution and perform another, more important task. When the task has completed, the program can continue where it left off. The classic examples of this style of program are the Windows forms that you have been using in the exercises involving graphical applications through this book. (Remember that in this book, the term *form* refers to a page in a Window Store app or a Microsoft Windows Presentation Foundation [WPF] window.) A form displays controls such as buttons and text boxes. When you click a button or type text in a text box, you expect the form to respond immediately. The application has to temporarily stop what it is doing and handle your input. This style of operation applies not only to graphical user interfaces (GUIs), but also to any application where an operation must be performed urgently—shutting down the reactor in a nuclear power plant if it is getting too hot, for example. To handle this kind of processing, the runtime has to provide two things: a means of indicating that something urgent has happened, and a way of specifying the code that should be run when the urgent event happens. Events, in conjunction with delegates, provide the infrastructure with which you can implement systems that follow this approach.

You'll start by looking at delegates.

## Understanding delegates

A delegate is a reference to a method. It is a very simple concept with extraordinarily powerful implications. Let me explain.

### NOTE

Delegates are so named because they “delegate” processing to the referenced method when they are invoked.

Typically, when you write a statement that invokes a method, you specify the name of the method (and possibly specify the object or structure to which the

method belongs). It is clear from your code exactly which method you are running and when you are running it. Look at the following simple example that calls the *performCalculation* method of a *Processor* object (what this method does or how the *Processor* class is defined is immaterial for this discussion):

```
Processor p = new Processor();  
p.performCalculation();
```

A *delegate* is an object that refers to a method. You can assign a reference to a method to a delegate in much the same way that you can assign an *int* value to an *int* variable. The next example creates a delegate named *performCalculationDelegate* that references the *performCalculation* method of the *Processor* object. I have deliberately omitted some elements of the statement that declares the delegate because it is important to understand the concept rather than worry about the syntax (you will see the full syntax shortly).

```
Processor p = new Processor();  
delegate ... performCalculationDelegate ...;  
performCalculationDelegate = p.performCalculation;
```

It is important to understand that the statement that assigns the method reference to the delegate does not run the method at this point; there are no parentheses after the method name, and you do not specify any parameters (if the method takes them). This is just an assignment statement.

Having stored a reference to the *performCalculation* method of the *Processor* object in the delegate, the application can subsequently invoke the method through the delegate, like this:

```
performCalculationDelegate();
```

This looks like an ordinary method call; if you did not know otherwise, it looks like you might actually be running a method named *performCalculationDelegate*. However, the Common Language Runtime (CLR) knows that this is a delegate, so it retrieves the method that the delegate references and runs that, instead. Later on, you can change the method to which a delegate refers, so a statement that calls a delegate might actually run a different method each time it executes. Additionally, a delegate can reference



more than one method at a time (think of it as a collection of method references), and when you invoke a delegate all of the methods to which it refers will run.

#### NOTE

If you are familiar with C++, a delegate is similar to a function pointer. However, unlike function pointers, delegates are completely type safe. You can make a delegate refer to only a method that matches the signature of the delegate, and you cannot invoke a delegate that does not refer to a valid method.

## Examples of delegates in the .NET Framework class library

The Microsoft .NET Framework class library makes extensive use of delegates for many of its types, two examples of which are in [Chapter 18](#): the *Find* method and the *Exists* method of the *List<T>* class. If you recall, these two methods search through a *List<T>* collection, either returning a matching item or testing for the existence of a matching item. The designers of the *List<T>* class had absolutely no idea of what should actually constitute a match in your application code when they were implementing this class, so consequently they let you define it instead by providing your own code in the form of a predicate. A predicate is really just a delegate that happens to return a Boolean value.

The following code should help to remind you of how you use the *Find* method:

```
struct Person
{
    public int ID { get; set; }
    public string Name { get; set; }
    public int Age { get; set; }
}
...
List<Person> personnel = new List<Person>()
{
    new Person() { ID = 1, Name = "John", Age = 47 },
    new Person() { ID = 2, Name = "Sid", Age = 28 },
    new Person() { ID = 3, Name = "Fred", Age = 34 },
    new Person() { ID = 4, Name = "Paul", Age = 22 },
};
...
// Find the member of the list that has an ID of 3
Person match = personnel.Find(p => p.ID == 3);
```

Other examples of methods exposed by the *List<T>* class that use delegates to perform their operations include *Average*, *Max*, *Min*, *Count*, and *Sum*. These methods take a *Func* delegate as the parameter. A *Func* delegate refers to a method that returns a value (a function). In the following examples, the *Average* method is used to calculate the average age of items in the personnel collection (the *Func<T>* delegate simply returns the value in the *Age* field of each item in the collection), the *Max* method is used to determine the item with the highest ID, and the *Count* method calculates how many items have an *Age* between 30 and 39 inclusive.

```
double averageAge = personnel.Average(p => p.Age);
Console.WriteLine("Average age is {0}", averageAge);
...
int id = personnel.Max(p => p.ID);
Console.WriteLine("Person with highest ID is {0}", id);
...
int thirties = personnel.Count(p => p.Age >= 30 && p.Age <= 39);
Console.WriteLine("Number of personnel in their thirties is {0}", thirties);
```

This code generates the following output:

```
Average age is 32.75
Person with highest ID is 4
Number of personnel in their thirties is 1
```

You will meet many examples of these and other delegate types used by the .NET Framework class library throughout the remainder of this book. You can also define your own delegates. The best way to fully understand how and when you might want to do this is to see them in action, so next you'll work through an example.

### THE *FUNC<T, ...>* AND *ACTION<T, ...>* DELEGATE TYPES

The parameter taken by the *Average*, *Max*, *Count*, and other methods of the *List<T>* class are actually generic *Func<T, TResult>* delegates; the type parameters refer to the type of the parameter passed to the delegate and the type of the return value. For the *Average*, *Max*, and *Count* methods of the *List<Person>* class shown in the text, the first type parameter *T* is the type of data in the list (the *Person* struct), whereas the *TResult* type parameter is determined by the context in which the delegate is used. In the following example, the type of *TResult* is *int* because the value returned by the *Count* method should be an integer:

```
int thirties = personnel.Count(p => p.Age >= 30 && p.Age <= 39);
```

So, in this example, the type of the delegate expected by the *Count* method is *Func<Person, int>*.

This point might seem somewhat academic because the compiler automatically generates the delegate based on the type of the *List<T>*, but it is worth familiarizing yourself with this idiom as it occurs time and again throughout the .NET Framework class library. In fact, the *System* namespace defines an entire family of *Func* delegate types, from *Func<TResult>* for functions that return a result without taking any parameters through to *Func<T1, T2, T3, T4, ..., T16, TResult>* for functions that take 16 parameters. If you find yourself in a situation in which you are creating your own delegate type that matches this pattern, you should consider using an appropriate *Func* delegate type, instead. You will meet the *Func* delegate types again in [Chapter 21](#).

Alongside *Func*, the *System* namespace also defines a series of *Action* delegate types. An *Action* delegate is used to reference a method that performs an action rather than returning a value (a *void* method). Again, a family of *Action* delegate types is available ranging from *Action<T>* (specifying a delegate that takes a single parameter) through to *Action<T1, T2, T3, T4, ..., T16>*.

## The automated factory scenario

Suppose you are writing the control systems for an automated factory. The factory contains a large number of different machines, each performing distinct tasks in the production of the articles manufactured by the factory—shaping and folding metal sheets, welding sheets together, painting sheets, and so on. Each machine was built and installed by a specialist vendor. The machines are all controlled by computer, and each vendor has provided a set of functions that you can use to control its machine. Your task is to integrate the different systems used by the machines into a single control program. One aspect on which you have decided to concentrate is to provide a means of shutting down all the machines—quickly, if needed!

Each machine has its own unique computer-controlled process (and functions) for shutting down safely, as summarized here:

```
StopFolding();    // Folding and shaping machine
FinishWelding();  // Welding machine
PaintOff();       // Painting machine
```

## Implementing the factory control system without using delegates

A simple approach to implementing the shutdown functionality in the control program is as follows:

Program 10-10: Controller

```
class Controller
{
    // Fields representing the different machines
    private FoldingMachine folder;
    private WeldingMachine welder;
    private PaintingMachine painter;
    ...
    public void ShutDown()
    {
        folder.StopFolding();
        welder.FinishWelding();
        painter.PaintOff();
    }
    ...
}
```

Although this approach works, it is not very extensible or flexible. If the factory buys a new machine, you must modify this code; the *Controller* class and code for managing the machines is tightly coupled.

## Implementing the factory by using a delegate

Although the names of each method are different, they all have the same “shape”: they take no parameters, and they do not return a value. (You’ll consider what happens if this isn’t the case later, so bear with me.) The general format of each method, therefore, is this:

```
void methodName();
```

This is where a delegate can be useful. You can use a delegate that matches this shape to refer to any of the machinery shutdown methods. You declare a delegate like this:

```
delegate void stopMachineryDelegate();
```

Note the following points:

- You use the *delegate* keyword.
- You specify the return type (*void* in this example), a name for the delegate

(*stopMachineryDelegate*), and any parameters (there are none in this case).

After you have declared the delegate, you can create an instance and make it refer to a matching method by using the `+=` compound assignment operator. You can do this in the constructor of the controller class like this:

```
class Controller
{
    delegate void stopMachineryDelegate();    // the delegate type
    private stopMachineryDelegate stopMachinery; // an instance of the delegate
    ...
    public Controller()
    {
        this.stopMachinery += folder.StopFolding;
    }
    ...
}
```

It takes a bit to get used to this syntax. You *add* the method to the delegate; remember that you are not actually calling the method at this point. The `+` operator is overloaded to have this new meaning when used with delegates. (You will learn more about operator overloading in [Chapter 22](#).) Notice that you simply specify the method name and do not include any parentheses or parameters.

It is safe to use the `+=` operator on an uninitialized delegate. It will be initialized automatically. Alternatively, you can use the *new* keyword to initialize a delegate explicitly with a single specific method, like this:

```
this.stopMachinery = new stopMachineryDelegate(folder.StopFolding);
```

You can call the method by invoking the delegate, like this:

```
public void ShutDown()
{
    this.stopMachinery();
    ...
}
```

You use the same syntax to invoke a delegate as you use to make a method call. If the method that the delegate refers to takes any parameters, you should specify

them at this time, between the parentheses.

#### NOTE

If you attempt to invoke a delegate that is uninitialized and does not refer to any methods, you will get a *NullReferenceException* exception.

An important advantage of using a delegate is that it can refer to more than one method at the same time. You simply use the `+=` operator to add methods to the delegate, like this:

```
public Controller()
{
    this.stopMachinery += folder.StopFolding;
    this.stopMachinery += welder.FinishWelding;
    this.stopMachinery += painter.PaintOff;
}
```

Invoking *this.stopMachinery()* in the *Shutdown* method of the *Controller* class automatically calls each of the methods in turn. The *Shutdown* method does not need to know how many machines there are or what the method names are.

You can remove a method from a delegate by using the `-=` compound assignment operator, as demonstrated here:

```
this.stopMachinery -= folder.StopFolding;
```

The current scheme adds the machine methods to the delegate in the *Controller* constructor. To make the *Controller* class totally independent of the various machines, you need to make *stopMachineryDelegate* type public and supply a means of enabling classes outside *Controller* to add methods to the delegate. You have several options:

- Make the *stopMachinery* delegate variable, public:

```
public stopMachineryDelegate stopMachinery;
```

- Keep the *stopMachinery* delegate variable private, but create a read/write

property to provide access to it:

```
private delegate void stopMachineryDelegate();
...
public stopMachineryDelegate StopMachinery
{
    get
    {
        return this.stopMachinery;
    }
    set
    {
        this.stopMachinery = value;
    }
}
```

- Provide complete encapsulation by implementing separate *Add* and *Remove* methods. The *Add* method takes a method as a parameter and adds it to the delegate, whereas the *Remove* method removes the specified method from the delegate (notice that you specify a method as a parameter by using a delegate type):

```
public void Add(stopMachineryDelegate stopMethod)
{
    this.stopMachinery += stopMethod;
}
public void Remove(stopMachineryDelegate stopMethod)
{
    this.stopMachinery -= stopMethod;
}
```

An object-oriented purist would probably opt for the *Add/Remove* approach. However, the other approaches are viable alternatives that are frequently used, which is why they are shown here.

Whichever technique you choose, you should remove the code that adds the machine methods to the delegate from the *Controller* constructor. You can then instantiate a *Controller* and objects representing the other machines like this (this example uses the *Add/Remove* approach):

```
Controller control = new Controller();
FoldingMachine folder = new FoldingMachine();
```

```

WeldingMachine welder = new WeldingMachine();
PaintingMachine painter = new PaintingMachine();
...
control.Add(folder.StopFolding);
control.Add(welder.FinishWelding);
control.Add(painter.PaintOff);
...
control.ShutDown();
...

```

## Declaring and using delegates

In the following exercises, you will complete an application that forms part of a system for a company called Wide World Importers. Wide World Importers imports and sells building materials and tools, and the application that you will be working on gives customers the ability to browse the items that Wide World Importers currently has in stock and place orders for these items. The application contains a form that displays the goods currently available, together with a pane that lists the items that a customer has selected. When the customer wants to place an order, she can click the Checkout button on the form. The order is then processed, and the pane is cleared.

When the customer places an order, currently several actions occur:

- Payment is requested from the customer.
- The items in the order are examined, and if any of them are age restricted (such as the power tools), details of the order are audited and tracked.
- A dispatch note is generated for shipping purposes. This dispatch note contains a summary of the order.

The logic for the auditing and shipping processes is independent from checkout logic, although the order in which these processes occur is immaterial.

Furthermore, there is the possibility that either of these elements might be amended in the future, and additional processing might be required by the checkout operation as business circumstances or regulatory requirements change in the future. Therefore, it is desirable to decouple the payment and checkout logic from the auditing and shipping processes to make maintenance and upgrades easier. You will start by examining the application and see how it currently fails to fulfill this objective. You will then modify the structure of the



currently have to remove this dependency. For what that means, the structure of the application to remove the dependencies between the checkout logic and the auditing and shipping logic.

Examine the Wide World Importers application

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Delegates project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 20\Windows X\Delegates folder in your Documents folder.
3. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

The project builds and runs. A form appears displaying the items available, together with a panel showing the details of the order (it is empty initially). The form has a different appearance depending on whether you are running the Windows Store app by using Windows 8.1, or the WPF application running on Windows 7 or Windows 8.

In Windows 8.1, the Windows Store app displays the items in a *GridView* control that scrolls horizontally (this is the Windows Store app–style of displaying data):

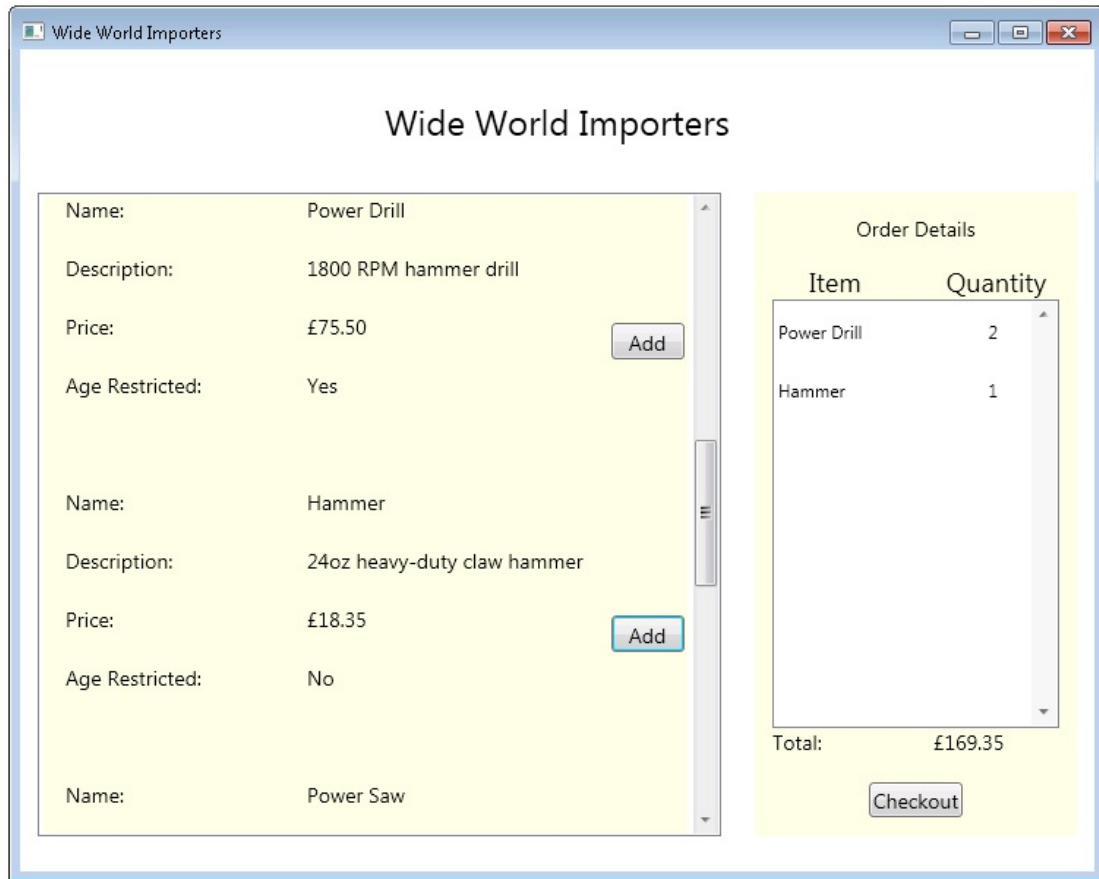
007 007

064 001

### Wide World Importers

Name: Rope Description: Best Italian hemp, 40ft Price: £28.00 Age Restricted: No Add	Name: Screwdriver Description: Crossheaded Price: £4.99 Age Restricted: No Add	Name: Hammer Description: 24oz heavy-duty claw Price: £18.35 Age Restricted: No Add	<div>Order Details</div> <table><thead><tr><th>Item</th><th>Quantity</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Power Drill</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Hammer</td><td>1</td></tr></tbody></table> <div>Total: £169.35</div> <div>Checkout</div>	Item	Quantity	Power Drill	2	Hammer	1
Item	Quantity								
Power Drill	2								
Hammer	1								
Name: Wood Description: Pine, 4' x 2' x 18" Price: £12.20 Age Restricted: No Add	Name: Power Drill Description: 1800 RPM hammer drill Price: £75.50 Age Restricted: Yes Add	Name: Power Saw Description: Rotary action, high power Price: £88.00 Age Restricted: Yes Add							

The WPF application running in Windows 7 or Windows 8 displays the items in a *ListView* control that scrolls vertically:



Apart from the look and feel of the application, the remainder of the functionality is the same in both environments.

4. Select one or more items and then click Add to include them to the shopping basket. Be sure that you select at least one age-restricted item.

As you add an item, it appears in the Order Details pane on the right side. Notice that if you add the same item more than once, the quantity is incremented for each click (this version of the application does not implement functionality to remove items from the basket).

5. In the Order Details pane, click Checkout.

A message appears indicating that the order has been placed. The order is given a unique ID, and this ID is displayed together with the value of the order.

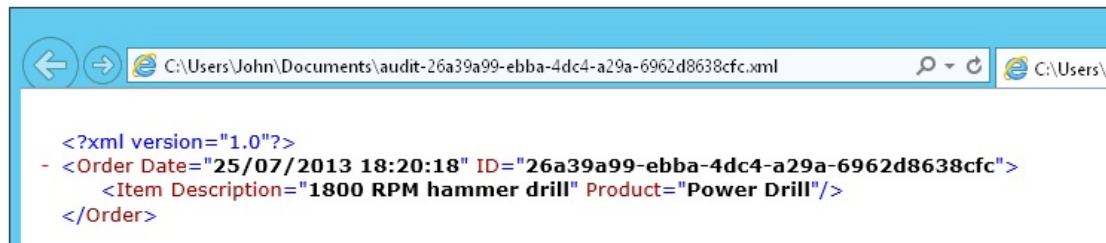
If you are using Windows 8.1, click Close to dismiss the message. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, click OK.

6. Return to the Visual Studio 2013 environment and stop debugging.
7. Using File Explorer in Windows 8 or Windows 8.1, or Windows Explorer in Windows 7, move to your Documents folder. You should see two files named audit-*nnnnnn*.xml (where *nnnnnn* is the ID of the order displayed earlier), and dispatch- *nnnnnn*.txt. The first file was generated by the auditing component, and the second file is the dispatch note generated by the shipping component.

#### NOTE

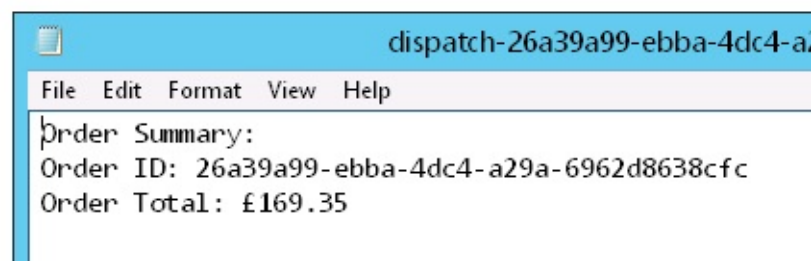
If there is no audit-*nnnnnn*.xml file, then you did not select any age-restricted items when you placed the order. In this case, switch back to the application and create a new order including one or more of these items.

8. Open the audit-*nnnnnn*.xml file by using Internet Explorer. This file contains a list of the age-restricted items in the order together with the order number and date. It should look similar to this:



Close Internet Explorer when you have finished examining this file.

9. Open the dispatch-*nnnnnn*.txt file by using Notepad. This file contains a summary of the order, listing the order ID and the value. It should look similar to this:



Close Notepad, return to Visual Studio 2013, and stop debugging.

10. In Visual Studio, notice that the solution consists of the following projects:

- **Delegates.** This project contains the application itself. The *MainWindow.xaml* file defines the user interface, and the application logic is contained within the *MainWindow.xaml.cs* file.
- **AuditService.** This project contains the component that implements the auditing process. It is packaged as a class library and contains a single class called *Auditor*. This class exposes a single public method called *AuditOrder* that examines an order and generates the *audit-nnnnnn.xml* file if the order contains any age-restricted items.
- **DeliveryService.** This project contains the component that performs the shipping logic, packaged as a class library. The shipping functionality is contained in the *Shipper* class, and it provides a public method named *ShipOrder* that handles the shipping process and also generates the dispatch note.

**NOTE**

You are welcome to examine the code in the *Auditor* and *Shipper* classes, but it is not necessary to fully understand the inner workings of these components in this application.

- **DataTypes.** This project contains the data types used by the other projects. The *Product* class defines the details of the products displayed by the application, and the data for the products is held in the *ProductDataSource* class. (The application currently uses a small hard-coded set of products. In a production system, this information would be retrieved from a database or web service.) The *Order* and *OrderItem* classes implement the structure of an order; each order contains one or more order items.
11. In the Delegates project, display the *MainWindow.xaml.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window and examine the private fields and *MainWindow* constructor in this file. The important elements look like this:

```

...
private Auditor auditor = null;
private Shipper shipper = null;
public MainWindow()
{
    ...
    this.auditor = new Auditor();
    this.shipper = new Shipper();
}

```

The *auditor* and *shipper* fields contain references to instances of the *Auditor* and *Shipper* classes, and the constructor instantiates these objects.

12. Locate the *CheckoutButtonClicked* method. This method runs when the user clicks Checkout to place an order. The first few lines look like this:

```

private void CheckoutButtonClicked(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        // Perform the checkout processing
        if (this.requestPayment())
        {
            this.auditor.AuditOrder(this.order);
            this.shipper.ShipOrder(this.order);
        }
        ...
    }
    ...
}

```

This method implements the checkout processing. It requests payment from the customer and then invokes the *AuditOrder* method of the *auditor* object followed by the *ShipOrder* method of the *shipper* object. Any additional business logic required in the future can be added here. The remainder of the code in this method after the *if* statement is concerned with managing the user interface: displaying the message box to the user and clearing out the Order Details pane on the right side of the form.

#### NOTE

For simplicity, the *requestPayment* method in this application currently just returns *true*

to indicate that payment has been received. In the real world, this method would perform the complete payment processing.

Although the application operates as advertised, the Auditor and Shipper components are tightly integrated into the checkout processing. If these components change, the application will need to be updated. Similarly, if you need to incorporate additional logic into the checkout process, possibly performed by using further components, you will need to amend this part of the application.

In the next exercise, you will see how you can decouple the business processing for the checkout operation from the application. The checkout processing will still need to invoke the Auditor and Shipper components, but it must be extensible enough to allow additional components to be easily incorporated. You will achieve this by creating a new component called *CheckoutController*. The *CheckoutController* component will implement the business logic for the checkout process and expose a delegate that enables an application to specify which components and methods should be included within this process. The *CheckoutController* component will invoke these methods by using the delegate.

Create the *CheckoutController* component

- a. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Delegates solution, point to Add, and then click New Project.
- b. In the Add New Project dialog box, if you are using Windows 8.1, in the left pane, click the Windows Store node. If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, in the left pane click the Windows node. In both cases (Windows 8.1 and Windows 7/Windows 8), in the middle pane select the Class Library template. In the Name box, type **CheckoutService**, and then click OK.
- c. In Solution Explorer, expand the CheckoutService project, right-click the file Class1.cs, and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click Rename. Change the name of the file to **CheckoutController.cs** and then press Enter. Allow Visual Studio to rename all references to Class1 as CheckoutController when prompted.

- d. Right-click the References folder in the CheckoutService project and then click Add Reference.
- e. In the Reference Manager – CheckoutService dialog box, in the left pane click Solution. In the middle pane select the DataTypes project, and then click OK.

The *CheckoutController* class will use the *Order* class defined in the DataTypes project.

#### NOTE

If you are using Windows 8.1 and you receive an error at this point, you probably did not create the CheckoutService project by using the Class Library template for Windows Store apps earlier in this exercise. In this case, right-click the CheckoutService project in Solution Explorer and then click Remove. Using Windows Explorer, move to the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 20\Windows 8.1\Delegates folder in your Documents folder and delete the CheckoutService folder, and then return to step 1 of this exercise.

- f. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the CheckoutController.cs file, add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using DataTypes;
```

- g. Add a public delegate type called *CheckoutDelegate* to the *CheckoutController* class, as shown in the following in bold:

```
public class CheckoutController
{
    public delegate void CheckoutDelegate(Order order);
}
```

You can use this delegate type to reference methods that take an *Order* parameter and that do not return a result. This just happens to match the shape of the *AuditOrder* and *ShipOrder* methods of the *Auditor* and *Shipper* classes.

- h. Add a public delegate called *CheckoutProcessing* based on this delegate type, like this:

```
public class CheckoutController
{
    public delegate void CheckoutDelegate(Order order);
    public CheckoutDelegate CheckoutProcessing = null;
}
```

- i. Display the *MainWindow.xaml.cs* file of the Delegates project in the Code and Text Editor window and locate the *requestPayment* method (it is at the end of the file). Cut this method from the *MainWindow* class. Return to the *CheckoutController.cs* file and paste the *requestPayment* method in the *CheckoutController* class, as shown in bold in the following:

```
public class CheckoutController
{
    public delegate void CheckoutDelegate(Order order);
    public CheckoutDelegate CheckoutProcessing = null;
    private bool requestPayment()
    {
        // Payment processing goes here
        // Payment logic is not implemented in this example
        // - simply return true to indicate payment has been received
        return true;
    }
}
```

- j. Add the *StartCheckoutProcess* method shown here in bold to the *CheckoutController* class:

```
public class CheckoutController
{
    public delegate void CheckoutDelegate(Order order);
    public CheckoutDelegate CheckoutProcessing = null;
    private bool requestPayment()
    {
        ...
    }
    public void StartCheckoutProcessing(Order order)
    {
```



```

        // Perform the checkout processing
        if (this.requestPayment())
        {
            if (this.CheckoutProcessing != null)
            {
                this.CheckoutProcessing(order);
            }
        }
    }
}

```

This method provides the checkout functionality previously implemented by the *CheckoutButtonClicked* method of the *MainWindow* class. It requests payment and then examines the *CheckoutProcessing* delegate; if this delegate is not *null* (it refers to one or more methods), it invokes the delegate. Any methods referenced by this delegate will run at this point.

- k. In Solution Explorer, in the Delegates project, right-click the References folder and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click Add Reference.
- l. In the Reference Manager – Delegates dialog box, in the left pane, click Solution. In the middle pane, select the CheckoutService project, and then click OK.
- m. Return to the MainWindow.xaml.cs file of the Delegates project and add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using CheckoutService;
```

- n. Add a private variable named *checkoutController* of type *CheckoutController* to the *MainWindow* class and initialize it to *null*, as shown in bold in the following:

```

public ... class MainWindow : ...
{
    ...
    private Auditor auditor = null;
    private Shipper shipper = null;

```

```

        private CheckoutController checkoutController = null;
        ...
    }

```

- o. Locate the *MainWindow* constructor. After the statements that create the *Auditor* and *Shipper* components, instantiate the *CheckoutController* component, as follows in bold:

```

public MainWindow()
{
    ...
    this.auditor = new Auditor();
    this.shipper = new Shipper();
    this.checkoutController = new CheckoutController();
}

```

- p. Add the following statements shown in bold to the constructor, after the statement you just entered:

```

public MainWindow()
{
    ...
    this.checkoutController = new CheckoutController();
    this.checkoutController.CheckoutProcessing +=
this.auditor.AuditOrder;
    this.checkoutController.CheckoutProcessing +=
this.shipper.ShipOrder;
}

```

This code adds references to the *AuditOrder* and *ShipOrder* methods of the *Auditor* and *Shipper* objects to the *CheckoutProcessing* delegate of the *CheckoutController* object.

- q. Find the *CheckoutButtonClicked* method. In the *try* block, replace the existing code that performs the checkout processing (the *if* statement block) with the statement shown here in bold:

```

private void CheckoutButtonClicked(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {

```

```

        // Perform the checkout processing
        this.checkoutController.StartCheckoutProcessing(this.order);

        // Display a summary of the order
        ...
    }
    ...
}

```

You have now decoupled the checkout logic from the components that this checkout processing uses. The business logic in the *MainWindow* class specifies which components that the *CheckoutController* should use. Test the application

- a. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
- b. When the Wide World Importers form appears, select some items (include at least one age-restricted item), and then click Checkout.
- c. When the Order Placed message appears, make a note of the order number, and then click Close or OK.
- d. Switch to Windows Explorer and move to your Documents folder. Verify that a new *audit-nnnnnn.xml* file and *dispatch-nnnnnn.txt* file have been created, where *nnnnnn* is the number that identifies the new order. Examine these files and verify that they contain the details of the order.
- e. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging.

## Lambda expressions and delegates

All the examples of adding a method to a delegate that you have seen so far use the method's name. For example, returning to the automated factory scenario described earlier, you add the *StopFolding* method of the *folder* object to the *stopMachinery* delegate, like this:

```
this.stopMachinery += folder.StopFolding;
```

This approach is very useful if there is a convenient method that matches the signature of the delegate, but what if this is not the case? Suppose that the *StopFolding* method actually had the following signature:

```
void StopFolding(int shutDownTime); // Shut down in the specified number of seconds
```

This signature is now different from that of the *FinishWelding* and *PaintOff* methods, and therefore you cannot use the same delegate to handle all three methods. So, what do you do?

## Creating a method adapter

One way around this problem is to create another method that calls *StopFolding* but that takes no parameters itself, like this:

```
void FinishFolding()
{
    folder.StopFolding(0); // Shut down immediately
}
```

You can then add the *FinishFolding* method to the *stopMachinery* delegate in place of the *StopFolding* method, using the same syntax as before:

```
this.stopMachinery += folder.FinishFolding;
```

When the *stopMachinery* delegate is invoked, it calls *FinishFolding*, which in turn calls the *StopFolding* method, passing in the parameter of 0.

### NOTE

The *FinishFolding* method is a classic example of an adapter: a method that converts (or adapts) a method to give it a different signature. This pattern is very common and is one of the set of patterns documented in the book *Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software* by Erich Gamma, Richard Helm, Ralph Johnson, and John Vlissides (Addison-Wesley Professional, 1994).

In many cases, adapter methods such as this are small, and it is easy to lose them in a sea of methods, especially in a large class. Furthermore, apart from using the

adapter method to adapt the *StopFolding* method for use by the delegate, it is unlikely to be called elsewhere. C# provides lambda expressions for situations such as this. Lambda expressions are described in [Chapter 18](#), and there are more examples of them earlier in this chapter. In the factory scenario, you can use the following lambda expression:

```
this.stopMachinery += (() => folder.StopFolding(0));
```

When you invoke the *stopMachinery* delegate, it will run the code defined by the lambda expression, which will, in turn, call the *StopFolding* method with the appropriate parameter.

## The forms of lambda expressions

Lambda expressions can take a number of subtly different forms. Lambda expressions were originally part of a mathematical notation called the *lambda calculus*, which provides a notation for describing functions. (You can think of a function as a method that returns a value.) Although the C# language has extended the syntax and semantics of the lambda calculus in its implementation of lambda expressions, many of the original principles still apply. Here are some examples showing the different forms of lambda expressions available in C#:

[illegible]

```
// Parameter x is passed by  
// reference, so the effect of  
// the ++ operation is permanent.
```

To summarize, here are some features of lambda expressions of which you should be aware:

- If a lambda expression takes parameters, you specify them in the parentheses to the left of the `=>` operator. You can omit the types of parameters, and the C# compiler will infer their types from the context of the lambda expression. You can pass parameters by reference (by using the *ref* keyword) if you want the lambda expression to be able to change its values other than locally, but this is not recommended.
- Lambda expressions can return values, but the return type must match that of the delegate to which they are being added.
- The body of a lambda expression can be a simple expression or a block of C# code made up of multiple statements, method calls, variable definitions, and other code items.
- Variables defined in a lambda expression method go out of scope when the method finishes.
- A lambda expression can access and modify all variables outside the lambda expression that are in scope when the lambda expression is defined. Be very careful with this feature!

### LAMBDA EXPRESSIONS AND ANONYMOUS METHODS

Lambda expressions were added to the C# language in version 3.0. C# version 2.0 introduced anonymous methods that can perform a similar task but are not as flexible. Anonymous methods were added primarily so that you can define delegates without having to create a named method—you simply provide the definition of the method body in place of the method name, like this:

```
this.stopMachinery += delegate { folder.StopFolding(0); };
```

You can also pass an anonymous method as a parameter in place of a delegate, like this:

```
control.Add(delegate { folder.StopFolding(0); } );
```

Notice that whenever you introduce an anonymous method, you must prefix it with the *delegate* keyword. Also, any parameters needed are specified in parentheses following the *delegate* keyword, as illustrated in the following example:

```
control.Add(delegate(int param1, string param2)
    { /* code that uses param1 and param2 */ ... });
```

Lambda expressions provide a more succinct and natural syntax than anonymous methods, and they pervade many of the more advanced aspects of C#, as you will see throughout the subsequent chapters in this book. Generally speaking, you should use lambda expressions rather than anonymous methods in your code.

## Enabling notifications by using events

You have now seen how to declare a delegate type, call a delegate, and create delegate instances. However, this is only half of the story. Although by using delegates you can invoke any number of methods indirectly, you still have to invoke the delegate explicitly. In many cases, it would be useful to have the delegate run automatically when something significant happens. For example, in the automated factory scenario, it could be vital to be able to invoke the *stopMachinery* delegate and halt the equipment if the system detects that a machine is overheating.

The .NET Framework provides *events*, which you can use to define and trap significant actions and arrange for a delegate to be called to handle the situation. Many classes in the .NET Framework expose events. Most of the controls that you can place on a form in a Windows Store app or WPF application, and the *Windows* class itself, use events so that you can run code when, for example, the user clicks a button or types something in a field. You can also declare your own events.

### Declaring an event

You declare an event in a class intended to act as an event source. An *event source* is usually a class that monitors its environment and raises an event when something significant happens. In the automated factory, an event source could be a class that monitors the temperature of each machine. The temperature-monitoring class would raise a “machine overheating” event if it detects that a

machine has exceeded its thermal radiation boundary (that is, it has become too hot). An event maintains a list of methods to call when it is raised. These methods are sometimes referred to as *subscribers*. These methods should be prepared to handle the “machine overheating” event and take the necessary corrective action: shut down the machines.

You declare an event similarly to how you declare a field. However, because events are intended to be used with delegates, the type of an event must be a delegate, and you must prefix the declaration with the *event* keyword. Use the following syntax to declare an event:

```
event delegateTypeName eventName
```

As an example, here’s the *StopMachineryDelegate* delegate from the automated factory. It has been relocated to a new class called *TemperatureMonitor*, which provides an interface to the various electronic probes monitoring the temperature of the equipment (this is a more logical place for the event than the *Controller* class):

```
class TemperatureMonitor
{
    public delegate void StopMachineryDelegate();
    ...
}
```

You can define the *MachineOverheating* event, which will invoke the *stopMachineryDelegate*, like this:

```
class TemperatureMonitor
{
    public delegate void StopMachineryDelegate();
    public event StopMachineryDelegate MachineOverheating;
    ...
}
```

The logic (not shown) in the *TemperatureMonitor* class raises the *MachineOverheating* event as necessary. You will see how to raise an event in the upcoming section **Raising an event**. Also, you add methods to an event (a process known as *subscribing* to the event) rather than adding them to the



delegate on which the event is based. You will look at this aspect of events next.

## Subscribing to an event

Like delegates, events come ready-made with a `+=` operator. You subscribe to an event by using this `+=` operator. In the automated factory, the software controlling each machine can arrange for the shutdown methods to be called when the *MachineOverheating* event is raised, like this:

```
class TemperatureMonitor
{
    public delegate void StopMachineryDelegate();
    public event StopMachineryDelegate MachineOverheating;
    ...
}
...
TemperatureMonitor tempMonitor = new TemperatureMonitor();
...
tempMonitor.MachineOverheating += (() => { folder.StopFolding(0); });
tempMonitor.MachineOverheating += welder.FinishWelding;
tempMonitor.MachineOverheating += painter.PaintOff;
```

Notice that the syntax is the same as for adding a method to a delegate. You can even subscribe by using a lambda expression. When the *tempMonitor.MachineOverheating* event runs, it will call all the subscribing methods and shut down the machines.

## Unsubscribing from an event

Knowing that you use the `+=` operator to attach a delegate to an event, you can probably guess that you use the `-=` operator to detach a delegate from an event. Calling the `-=` operator removes the method from the event's internal delegate collection. This action is often referred to as *unsubscribing* from the event.

## Raising an event

You can raise an event, just like a delegate, by calling it like a method. When you raise an event, all the attached delegates are called in sequence. For example, here's the *TemperatureMonitor* class with a private *Notify* method that raises the *MachineOverheating* event:

```

class TemperatureMonitor
{
    public delegate void StopMachineryDelegate();
    public event StopMachineryDelegate MachineOverheating;
    ...
    private void Notify()
    {
        if (this.MachineOverheating != null)
        {
            this.MachineOverheating();
        }
    }
    ...
}

```

This is a common idiom. The *null* check is necessary because an event field is implicitly *null* and only becomes non-*null* when a method subscribes to it by using the += operator. If you try to raise a *null* event, you will get a *NullReferenceException* exception. If the delegate defining the event expects any parameters, the appropriate arguments must be provided when you raise the event. You will see some examples of this later.

#### IMPORTANT

Events have a very useful built-in security feature. A public event (such as *MachineOverheating*) can be raised only by methods in the class that define it (the *TemperatureMonitor* class). Any attempt to raise the method outside the class results in a compiler error.

## Understanding user interface events

As mentioned earlier, the .NET Framework classes and controls used for building GUIs employ events extensively. For example, the *Button* class derives from the *ButtonBase* class, inheriting a public event called *Click* of type *RoutedEventHandler*. The *RoutedEventHandler* delegate expects two parameters: a reference to the object that caused the event to be raised, and a *RoutedEventArgs* object that contains additional information about the event:

```

public delegate void RoutedEventHandler(Object sender, RoutedEventArgs e);

```

The *Button* class looks like this:

```
public class ButtonBase: ...
{
    public event RoutedEventHandler Click;
    ...
}
public class Button: ButtonBase
{
    ...
}
```

The *Button* class automatically raises the *Click* event when you click the button on the screen. This arrangement makes it easy to create a delegate for a chosen method and attach that delegate to the required event. The following example shows the code for a WPF form that contains a button called *okay* and the code to connect the *Click* event of the *okay* button to the *okayClick* method (forms in Windows Store apps operate in a similar manner):

```
public partial class Example : System.Windows.Window,
    System.Windows.Markup.IComponentConnector
{
    internal System.Windows.Controls.Button okay;
    ...
    void System.Windows.Markup.IComponentConnector.Connect(...)
    {
        ...
        this.okay.Click += new System.Windows.RoutedEventHandler(this.okayClick);
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```

This code is usually hidden from you. When you use the Design View window in Visual Studio 2013 and set the *Click* property of the *okay* button to *okayClick* in the Extensible Application Markup Language (XAML) description of the form, Visual Studio 2013 generates this code for you. All you have to do is write your application logic in the event handling method, *okayClick*, in the part of the code to which you do have access, which is the *Example.xaml.cs* file in this case:

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 84

```

public partial class Example : System.Windows.Window
{
    ...
    private void okayClick(object sender, RoutedEventArgs args)
    {
        // your code to handle the Click event
    }
}

```

The events that the various GUI controls generate always follow the same pattern. The events are of a delegate type whose signature has a *void* return type and two arguments. The first argument is always the sender (the source) of the event, and the second argument is always an *EventArgs* argument (or a class derived from *EventArgs*).

With the *sender* argument, you can reuse a single method for multiple events. The delegated method can examine the *sender* argument and respond accordingly. For example, you can use the same method to subscribe to the *Click* event for two buttons. (You add the same method to two different events.) When the event is raised, the code in the method can examine the *sender* argument to ascertain which button was clicked.

## Using events

In the previous exercise, you amended the Wide World Importers application to decouple the auditing and shipping logic from the checkout process. The *CheckoutController* class that you built invokes the auditing and shipping components by using a delegate and has no knowledge about these components or the methods it is running; this is the responsibility of the application that creates the *CheckoutController* object and adds the appropriate references to the delegate. However, it might be useful for a component to be able to alert the application when it has completed its processing and enable the application to perform any necessary tidying up.

This might sound a little strange at first—surely when the application invokes the delegate in the *CheckoutController* object, the methods referenced by this delegate run, and the application only continues with the next statement when these methods have finished? This is not necessarily the case! **Chapter 24** demonstrates that methods can run asynchronously, and when you invoke a

method, it might not have completed before execution continues with the next statement. This is especially true in Windows Store apps in which long-running operations are performed on background threads to enable the user interface to remain responsive. In the Wide World Importers application, in the *CheckoutButtonClicked* method, the code that invokes the delegate is followed by a statement that displays a dialog box with a message indicating that the order has been placed. In the Windows 8.1 Windows Store app, the code looks like this:

```
private void CheckoutButtonClicked(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        // Perform the checkout processing
        this.checkoutController.StartCheckoutProcessing(this.order);
        // Display a summary of the order
        MessageDialog dlg = new MessageDialog(...);
        dlg.ShowAsync();
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```

The code for the WPF version of the application used by Windows 7 and Windows 8 is similar except that WPF uses a different API for displaying messages.

```
private void CheckoutButtonClicked(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        // Perform the checkout processing
        this.checkoutController.StartCheckoutProcessing(this.order);
        // Display a summary of the order
        MessageBox.Show(...);
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```

In fact, there is no guarantee that the processing performed by the delegated methods has completed by the time the dialog box appears, so the message could

actually be misleading. This is where an event is invaluable. The Auditor and Shipper components could both publish an event to which the application subscribes. This event could be raised by the components only when they have completed their processing. When the application receives this event, it can display the message, safe in the knowledge that it is now accurate.

In the following exercise, you will modify the *Auditor* and *Shipper* classes to raise an event that occurs when they have completed their processing. The application will subscribe to the event for each component and display an appropriate message when the event occurs.

Add an event to the *CheckoutController* class

1. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and display the Delegates solution.
2. In the AuditService project, open the Auditor.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
3. Add a public delegate called *AuditingCompleteDelegate* to the *Auditor* class. This delegate should specify a method that takes a string parameter called *message* and that returns a *void*. The code in bold in the following example shows the definition of this delegate:

```
class Auditor
{
    public delegate void AuditingCompleteDelegate(string message);
    ...
}
```

4. Add a public event called *AuditProcessingComplete* to the *Auditor* class, after the *AuditingCompleteDelegate* delegate. This event should be based on the *AuditingCompleteDelegate* delegate as shown in bold in the following code:

```
class Auditor
{
    public delegate void AuditingCompleteDelegate(string message);
    public event AuditingCompleteDelegate AuditProcessingComplete;
    ...
}
```

5. Locate the *AuditOrder* method. This is the method that is run by using the delegate in the *CheckoutController* object. It invokes another private method called *doAuditing* to actually perform the audit operation. The method looks like this:

```
public void AuditOrder(Order order)
{
    this.doAuditing(order);
}
```

6. Scroll down to the *doAuditing* method. The code in this method is enclosed in a *try/catch* block; it uses the XML APIs of the .NET Framework class library to generate an XML representation of the order being audited and saves it to a file. (The exact details of how this works are beyond the scope of this chapter, and they vary between the Windows Store app implementation and the more traditional approach implemented by the WPF version of the code.)

After the *catch* block, add a *finally* block that raises the *AuditProcessingComplete* event, as shown in the following in bold:

```
private async void doAuditing(Order order)
{
    List<OrderItem> ageRestrictedItems = findAgeRestrictedItems(order);
    if (ageRestrictedItems.Count > 0)
    {
        try
        {
            ...
        }
        catch (Exception ex)
        {
            ...
        }
        finally
        {
            if (this.AuditProcessingComplete != null)
            {
                this.AuditProcessingComplete(String.Format(
                    "Audit record written for Order {0}", order.OrderID));
            }
        }
    }
}
```

```
}
```

7. In the `DeliveryService` project, open the `Shipper.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window.
8. Add a public delegate called *ShippingCompleteDelegate* to the *Shipper* class. This delegate should specify a method that takes a string parameter called *message* and that returns a *void*. The code in bold in the following example shows the definition of this delegate:

```
class Shipper
{
    public delegate void ShippingCompleteDelegate(string message);
    ...
}
```

9. Add a public event called *ShipProcessingComplete* based on the *ShippingCompleteDelegate* delegate to the *Shipper* class as shown in bold in the following code:

```
class Shipper
{
    public delegate void ShippingCompleteDelegate(string message);
    public event ShippingCompleteDelegate ShipProcessingComplete;
    ...
}
```

10. Find the *doShipping* method, which is the method that performs the shipping logic. In the method, after the *catch* block, add a *finally* block that raises the *ShipProcessingComplete* event, as shown here in bold:

```
private async void doShipping(Order order)
{
    try
    {
        ...
    }
    catch (Exception ex)
    {
        ...
    }
}
```



```

    finally
    {
        if (this.ShipProcessingComplete != null)
        {
            this.ShipProcessingComplete(String.Format(
                "Dispatch note generated for Order {0}", order.OrderID));
        }
    }
}

```

11. In the Delegates project, display the layout for the MainWindow.xaml file in the Design View window. In the XAML pane, scroll down to the first set of *RowDefinition* items. If you are using Windows 8.1, the XAML code looks like this:

```

<Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundBrush}">
    <Grid Margin="12,0,12,0">
        <Grid.RowDefinitions>
            <RowDefinition Height="*" />
            <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
            <RowDefinition Height="*" />
            <RowDefinition Height="10" />
            <RowDefinition Height="*" />
        </Grid.RowDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid>
</Grid>

```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, the XAML code looks like this:

```

<Grid Margin="12,0,12,0">
    <Grid.RowDefinitions>
        <RowDefinition Height="*" />
        <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
        <RowDefinition Height="*" />
        <RowDefinition Height="18" />
        <RowDefinition Height="*" />
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>
    ...
</Grid>

```

12. If you are using Windows 8.1, change the *Height* property of the final *RowDefinition* item to 2\* as shown in bold in the following code:

```

<Grid.RowDefinitions>
    ...

```

```

        <RowDefinition Height="10*" />
        <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>

```

If you are using Windows 7 or Windows 8, change the *Height* property of the final *RowDefinition* item to 3\*:

```

<Grid.RowDefinitions>
    ...
    <RowDefinition Height="18*" />
    <RowDefinition Height="3*" />
</Grid.RowDefinitions>

```

This change in the layout makes available a bit of space at the bottom of the form. You will use this space as an area for displaying the messages received from the Auditor and Shipper components when they raise their events. [Chapter 25](#) provides more detail on laying out user interfaces by using a *Grid* control.

13. Scroll to the bottom of the XAML pane. If you are using Windows 8.1, add the following *ScrollView* and *TextBlock* elements shown in bold before the penultimate `</Grid>` tag:

```

    ...
        </Grid>
        <ScrollView Grid.Row="4" VerticalScrollBarVisibility="Visible">
            <TextBlock x:Name="messageBar" FontSize="18" >
        <ScrollView>
    </Grid>
</Grid>
</Page>

```

If you are using Windows 7, add the *ScrollView* and *TextBlock* elements shown in the following code before the final `</Grid>` tag (note the different font size):

```

    ...
        </Grid>
        <ScrollView Grid.Row="4" VerticalScrollBarVisibility="Visible">
            <TextBlock x:Name="messageBar" FontSize="14" >
        <ScrollView>
    </Grid>

```

```
</Grid>
</Window>
```

This markup adds a *TextBlock* control called *messageBar* to the area at the bottom of the screen. You will use this control to display messages from the *Auditor* and *Shipper* objects.

14. Display the `MainWindow.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window. Find the *CheckoutButtonClicked* method and remove the code that displays the summary of the order. The *try* block should look like this after you have deleted the code:

```
private void CheckoutButtonClicked(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    try
    {
        // Perform the checkout processing
        this.checkoutController.StartCheckoutProcessing(this.order);
        // Clear out the order details so the user can start again with a new
order
        this.order = new Order { Date = DateTime.Now, Items = new
List<OrderItem>(),
                                OrderID = Guid.NewGuid(), TotalValue = 0 };
        this.orderDetails.DataContext = null;
        this.orderValue.Text = String.Format("{0:C}", order.TotalValue);
        this.listViewHeader.Visibility = Visibility.Collapsed;
        this.checkout.IsEnabled = false;
    }
    catch (Exception ex)
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

15. Add a private method called *displayMessage* to the *MainWindow* class. This method should take a string parameter called *message*, and it should return a *void*. In the body of this method, add a statement that appends the value in the message parameter to the *Text* property of the *messageBar TextBlock* control, followed by a newline character, as shown in the following in bold:

```
private void displayMessage(string message)
{
    this.messageBar.Text += message + "\n";
}
```

This code causes the message to appear in the message area at the bottom of the form.

16. Find the constructor for the *MainWindow* class and add the code shown here in bold:

```
public MainWindow()
{
    ...
    this.auditor = new Auditor();
    this.shipper = new Shipper();
    this.checkoutController = new CheckoutController();
    this.checkoutController.CheckoutProcessing += this.auditor.AuditOrder;
    this.checkoutController.CheckoutProcessing += this.shipper.ShipOrder;
    this.auditor.AuditProcessingComplete += this.displayMessage;
    this.shipper.ShipProcessingComplete += this.displayMessage;
}
```

These statements subscribe to the events exposed by the *Auditor* and *Shipper* objects. When the events are raised, the *displayMessage* method runs. Notice that the same method handles both events.

17. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
18. When the Wide World Importers form appears, select some items (include at least one age-restricted item), and then click Checkout.
19. Verify that the “Audit record written” message appears in the *TextBlock* at the bottom of the form, followed by the “Dispatch note generated” message:

## Wide World Importers

|   |                         |                     |                       |                     |                        |   |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---|
| Name:   | Rope                    | Name:               | Screwdriver           | Name:               | Hammer                 | Order Details   |
| Description:  | Best Italian hemp, 40ft | Description:        | Crosshead             | Description:        | 24oz heavy-duty claw   |   |
| Price:  | £28.00                  | Price:              | £4.99                 | Price:              | £18.35                 |   |
| Age Restricted:   | No                      | Age Restricted:     | No                    | Age Restricted:     | No                     |   |
| <a href="#">Add</a>   |                         | <a href="#">Add</a> |                       | <a href="#">Add</a> |                        |   |
| Name:   | Wood                    | Name:               | Power Drill           | Name:               | Power Saw              |   |
| Description:  | Pine, 4' x 2' x 18'     | Description:        | 1800 RPM hammer drill | Description:        | Rotary action, high po |   |
| Price:  | £12.20                  | Price:              | £75.50                | Price:              | £88.00                 |   |
| Age Restricted:   | No                      | Age Restricted:     | Yes                   | Age Restricted:     | Yes                    |   |
| <a href="#">Add</a>   |                         | <a href="#">Add</a> |                       | <a href="#">Add</a> |                        |   |
| <div> <div>Audit record written for Order 59fa954d-5b89-4925-930e-d0d85c7ab5fa</div> <div>Dispatch note generated for Order 59fa954d-5b89-4925-930e-d0d85c7ab5fa</div> </div> |                         |                     |                       |                     |                        | <div>Total: £0.00</div> <div><a href="#">Checkout</a></div> |

20. Place further orders and note the new messages that appear each time you click Checkout (you might need to scroll down to see them when the message area fills up).
21. When you have finished, return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to use delegates to reference methods and invoke those methods. You also saw how to define lambda expressions that can be run by using a delegate. Finally, you learned how to define and use events to trigger execution of a method.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 21**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

| To   | Do this  |
|--|--|
| Declare a delegate type  | <p>Write the keyword <i>delegate</i>, followed by the return type, followed by the name of the delegate type, followed by any parameter types. For example:</p> <pre>delegate void myDelegate();</pre>   |
| Create an instance of a delegate initialized with a single specific method | <p>Use the same syntax you use for a class or structure: write the keyword <i>new</i>, followed by the name of the type (the name of the delegate), followed by the argument between parentheses. The argument must be a method whose signature exactly matches the signature of the delegate. For example:</p> <pre>delegate void myDelegate(); private void myMethod() { ... } ... myDelegate del = new myDelegate(this.myMethod);</pre> |
| Invoke a delegate  | <p>Use the same syntax as a method call. For example:</p> <pre>myDelegate del; ... del();</pre>  |
| Declare an event   | <p>Write the keyword <i>event</i>, followed by the name of the type (the type must be a delegate type), followed by the name of the event. For example:</p> <pre>delegate void myDelegate(); class MyClass {     public event myDelegate MyEvent; }</pre>  |
| Subscribe to an event  | <p>Create a delegate instance (of the same type as the event), and attach the delegate instance to the event by using the += operator. For example:</p> <pre>class MyEventHandlerClass {     private MyClass myClass = new MyClass();     ...     public void Start()     {</pre>  |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
|                           | <pre>         myClass.MyEvent += new myDelegate             (this.eventHandlingMethod);     }     private void eventHandlingMethod()     {         ...     } } </pre> <p>You can also get the compiler to generate the new delegate automatically simply by specifying the subscribing method:</p> <pre> public void Start() {     myClass.MyEvent += this.eventHandlingMethod; } </pre>   |
| Unsubscribe from an event | <p>Create a delegate instance (of the same type as the event), and detach the delegate instance from the event by using the <code>-=</code> operator. For example:</p> <pre> class MyEventHandlingClass {     private MyClass myClass = new MyClass();     ...     public void Stop()     {         myClass.MyEvent -= new myDelegate             (this.eventHandlingMethod);     }     ... } </pre> <p>Or:</p> <pre> public void Stop() {     myClass.MyEvent -= this.eventHandlingMethod; } </pre> |
| Raise an event            | <p>Use the same syntax as a method call. You must supply arguments to match the type of the parameters expected by the delegate referenced by the event. Don't forget to check whether the event is <i>null</i>. For example:</p>  |

```
class MyClass
{
    public event myDelegate MyEvent;
    ...
    private void RaiseEvent()
    {
        if (this.MyEvent != null)
        {
            this.MyEvent();
        }
    }
    ...
}
```



# Chapter 21. Querying in-memory data by using query expressions

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- What is Language-Integrated Query?
- Using query operators
- Explain how Language-Integrated Query defers evaluation of a query and how you can force immediate execution and cache the results of a Language-Integrated Query query.

You have now met most of the features of the C# language. However, so far I have glossed over one important aspect of the language that is likely to be used by many applications: the support that C# provides for querying data. You have seen that you can define structures and classes for modeling data and that you can use collections and arrays for temporarily storing data in memory. However, how do you perform common tasks such as searching for items in a collection that match a specific set of criteria? For example, if you have a collection of *Customer* objects, how do you find all customers that are located in London, or how can you find out which town has the most customers that have procured your services? You can write your own code to iterate through a collection and examine the fields in each object, but these types of tasks occur so often that the designers of C# decided to include features in the language to minimize the amount of code you need to write. In this chapter, you will learn how to use these advanced C# language features to query and manipulate data.

## What is Language-Integrated Query?

All but the most trivial of applications need to process data. Historically, most applications provided their own logic for performing these operations. However,

this strategy can lead to the code in an application becoming very tightly coupled with the structure of the data that it processes. If the data structures change, you might need to make a significant number of changes to the code that handles the data. The designers of the Microsoft .NET Framework thought long and hard about these issues and decided to make the life of an application developer easier by providing features that abstract the mechanism that an application uses to query data from application code itself. These features are called Language-Integrated Query, or LINQ.

The creators of LINQ took an unabashed look at the way in which relational database management systems such as Microsoft SQL Server separate the language used to query a database from the internal format of the data in the database. Developers accessing a SQL Server database issue Structured Query Language (SQL) statements to the database management system. SQL provides a high-level description of the data that the developer wants to retrieve but does not indicate exactly how the database management system should retrieve this data. These details are controlled by the database management system itself. Consequently, an application that invokes SQL statements does not care how the database management system physically stores or retrieves data. The format used by the database management system can change (for example, if a new version is released) without the application developer needing to modify the SQL statements used by the application.

LINQ provides syntax and semantics very reminiscent of SQL, and with many of the same advantages. You can change the underlying structure of the data being queried without needing to change the code that actually performs the queries. You should be aware that although LINQ looks similar to SQL, it is far more flexible and can handle a wider variety of logical data structures. For example, LINQ can handle data organized hierarchically, such as that found in an XML document. However, this chapter concentrates on using LINQ in a relational manner.

## Using LINQ in a C# application

Perhaps the easiest way to explain how to use the C# features that support LINQ is to work through some simple examples based on the following sets of customer and address information:

*Table 21-1. Customer Information*

| CustomerID | FirstName | LastName    | CompanyName          |
|------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1          | Kim       | Abercrombie | Alpine Ski House     |
| 2          | Jeff      | Hay         | Coho Winery          |
| 3          | Charlie   | Herb        | Alpine Ski House     |
| 4          | Chris     | Preston     | Trey Research        |
| 5          | Dave      | Barnett     | Wingtip Toys         |
| 6          | Ann       | Beebe       | Coho Winery          |
| 7          | John      | Kane        | Wingtip Toys         |
| 8          | David     | Simpson     | Trey Research        |
| 9          | Greg      | Chapman     | Wingtip Toys         |
| 10         | Tim       | Litton      | Wide World Importers |

*Table 21-2. Address Information*

| CompanyName          | City          | Country        |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Alpine Ski House     | Berne         | Switzerland    |
| Coho Winery          | San Francisco | United States  |
| Trey Research        | New York      | United States  |
| Wingtip Toys         | London        | United Kingdom |
| Wide World Importers | Tetbury       | United Kingdom |

LINQ requires the data to be stored in a data structure that implements the *IEnumerable* or *IEnumerable<T>* interface, as described in [Chapter 19](#). It does not matter what structure you use (an array, a *HashSet<T>*, a *Queue<T>*, or any of the other collection types, or even one that you define yourself) as long as it is enumerable. However, to keep things straightforward, the examples in this chapter assume that the customer and address information is held in the

*customers* and *addresses* arrays shown in the following code example.

#### NOTE

In a real-world application, you would populate these arrays by reading the data from a file or a database.

```
var customers = new[] {  
    new { CustomerID = 1, FirstName = "Kim", LastName = "Abercrombie",  
          CompanyName = "Alpine Ski House" },  
    new { CustomerID = 2, FirstName = "Jeff", LastName = "Hay",  
          CompanyName = "Coho Winery" },  
    new { CustomerID = 3, FirstName = "Charlie", LastName = "Herb",  
          CompanyName = "Alpine Ski House" },  
    new { CustomerID = 4, FirstName = "Chris", LastName = "Preston",  
          CompanyName = "Trey Research" },  
    new { CustomerID = 5, FirstName = "Dave", LastName = "Barnett",  
          CompanyName = "Wingtip Toys" },  
    new { CustomerID = 6, FirstName = "Ann", LastName = "Beebe",  
          CompanyName = "Coho Winery" },  
    new { CustomerID = 7, FirstName = "John", LastName = "Kane",  
          CompanyName = "Wingtip Toys" },  
    new { CustomerID = 8, FirstName = "David", LastName = "Simpson",  
          CompanyName = "Trey Research" },  
    new { CustomerID = 9, FirstName = "Greg", LastName = "Chapman",  
          CompanyName = "Wingtip Toys" },  
    new { CustomerID = 10, FirstName = "Tim", LastName = "Litton",  
          CompanyName = "Wide World Importers" }  
};  
var addresses = new[] {  
    new { CompanyName = "Alpine Ski House", City = "Berne",  
          Country = "Switzerland"},  
    new { CompanyName = "Coho Winery", City = "San Francisco",  
          Country = "United States"},  
    new { CompanyName = "Trey Research", City = "New York",  
          Country = "United States"},  
    new { CompanyName = "Wingtip Toys", City = "London",  
          Country = "United Kingdom"},  
    new { CompanyName = "Wide World Importers", City = "Tetbury",  
          Country = "United Kingdom"}  
};
```

#### NOTE

The sections [Selecting data](#) [Filtering data](#) [Ordering, grouping, and aggregating data](#) and [Joining data](#) that follow show you the basic capabilities and syntax for querying data by using LINQ methods. The syntax can become a little complex at times, and you will see when you reach the section [Using query operators](#) that it is not actually necessary to remember how all the syntax works. However, it is useful for you to at least take a look at these sections so that you can fully appreciate how the query operators provided with C# perform their tasks.

## Selecting data

Suppose that you want to display a list consisting of the first name of each customer in the *customers* array. You can achieve this task with the following code:

```
IEnumerable<string> customerFirstNames =  
    customers.Select(cust => cust.FirstName);  
foreach (string name in customerFirstNames)  
{  
    Console.WriteLine(name);  
}
```

Although this block of code is quite short, it does a lot, and it requires a degree of explanation, starting with the use of the *Select* method of the *customers* array.

Using the *Select* method, you can retrieve specific data from the array—in this case, just the value in the *FirstName* field of each item in the array. How does it work? The parameter to the *Select* method is actually another method that takes a row from the *customers* array and returns the selected data from that row. You can define your own custom method to perform this task, but the simplest mechanism is to use a lambda expression to define an anonymous method, as shown in the preceding example. There are three important things that you need to understand at this point:

- The variable *cust* is the parameter passed in to the method. You can think of *cust* as an alias for each row in the *customers* array. The compiler deduces this from the fact that you are calling the *Select* method on the *customers* array. You can use any legal C# identifier in place of *cust*.
- The *Select* method does not actually retrieve the data at this time; it simply returns an enumerable object that will fetch the data identified by the *Select* method when you iterate over it later. We will return to this aspect of LINQ

in the section [LINQ and deferred evaluation](#) later in this chapter.

- The *Select* method is not actually a method of the *Array* type. It is an extension method of the *Enumerable* class. The *Enumerable* class is located in the *System.Linq* namespace and provides a substantial set of static methods for querying objects that implement the generic *IEnumerable<T>* interface.

The preceding example uses the *Select* method of the *customers* array to generate an *IEnumerable<string>* object named *customerFirstNames*. (It is of type *IEnumerable<string>* because the *Select* method returns an enumerable collection of customer first names, which are strings.) The *foreach* statement iterates through this collection of strings, printing out the first name of each customer in the following sequence:

```
Kim
Jeff
Charlie
Chris
Dave
Ann
John
David
Greg
Tim
```

You can now display the first name of each customer. How do you fetch the first and last name of each customer? This task is slightly trickier. If you examine the definition of the *Enumerable.Select* method in the *System.Linq* namespace in the documentation supplied with Microsoft Visual Studio 2013, you will see that it looks like this:

```
public static IEnumerable<TResult> Select<TSource, TResult> (
    this IEnumerable<TSource> source,
    Func<TSource, TResult> selector
)
```

What this actually says is that *Select* is a generic method that takes two type parameters named *TSource* and *TResult* as well as two ordinary parameters named *source* and *selector*. *TSource* is the type of the collection that you are

generating an enumerable set of results for (*customer* objects in this example), and *TResult* is the type of the data in the enumerable set of results (*string* objects in this example). Remember that *Select* is an extension method, so the *source* parameter is actually a reference to the type being extended (a generic collection of *customer* objects that implements the *IEnumerable* interface in the example). The *selector* parameter specifies a generic method that identifies the fields to be retrieved. (Remember that *Func* is the name of a generic delegate type in the .NET Framework that you can use for encapsulating a generic method that returns a result.) The method referred to by the *selector* parameter takes a *TSource* (in this case, *customer*) parameter and yields a *TResult* (in this case, *string*) object. The value returned by the *Select* method is an enumerable collection of *TResult* (again *string*) objects.

#### NOTE

**Chapter 12** explains how extension methods work and the role of the first parameter to an extension method.

The important point to understand from the preceding paragraph is that the *Select* method returns an enumerable collection based on a single type. If you want the enumerator to return multiple items of data, such as the first and last name of each customer, you have at least two options:

- You can concatenate the first and last names together into a single string in the *Select* method, like this:

```
IEnumerable<string> customerNames =  
    customers.Select(cust => String.Format("{0} {1}", cust.FirstName,  
cust.LastName));
```

- You can define a new type that wraps the first and last names, and use the *Select* method to construct instances of this type, like this:

```
class FullName  
{  
    public string FirstName{ get; set; }  
    public string LastName{ get; set; }  
}
```

```

...
IEnumerable<FullName> customerNames =
    customers.Select(cust => new FullName
    {
        FirstName = cust.FirstName,
        LastName = cust.LastName
    });

```

The second option is arguably preferable, but if this is the only use that your application makes of the *Names* type, you might prefer to use an anonymous type instead of defining a new type specifically for a single operation, like this:

```

var customerNames =
    customers.Select(cust => new { FirstName = cust.FirstName, LastName =
    cust.LastName } );

```

Notice the use of the *var* keyword here to define the type of the enumerable collection. The type of objects in the collection is anonymous, so you do not know the specific type for the objects in the collection.

## Filtering data

With the *Select* method, you can specify, or *project*, the fields that you want to include in the enumerable collection. However, you might also want to restrict the rows that the enumerable collection contains. For example, suppose you want to list the names of all companies in the *addresses* array that are located in the United States only. To do this, you can use the *Where* method, as follows:

```

IEnumerable<string> usCompanies =
    addresses.Where(addr => String.Equals(addr.Country, "United States"))
        .Select(usComp => usComp.CompanyName);
foreach (string name in usCompanies)
{
    Console.WriteLine(name);
}

```

Syntactically, the *Where* method is similar to *Select*. It expects a parameter that defines a method that filters the data according to whatever criteria you specify. This example makes use of another lambda expression. The variable *addr* is an alias for a row in the *addresses* array, and the lambda expression returns all rows



where the *Country* field matches the string “*United States*”. The *Where* method returns an enumerable collection of rows containing every field from the original collection. The *Select* method is then applied to these rows to project only the *CompanyName* field from this enumerable collection to return another enumerable collection of *string* objects. (The variable *usComp* is an alias for the type of each row in the enumerable collection returned by the *Where* method.) The type of the result of this complete expression is therefore *IEnumerable<string>*. It is important to understand this sequence of operations—the *Where* method is applied first to filter the rows, followed by the *Select* method to specify the fields. The *foreach* statement that iterates through this collection displays the following companies:

```
Coho Winery  
Trey Research
```

## Ordering, grouping, and aggregating data

If you are familiar with SQL, you are aware that it makes it possible you to perform a wide variety of relational operations besides simple projection and filtering. For example, you can specify that you want data to be returned in a specific order, you can group the rows returned according to one or more key fields, and you can calculate summary values based on the rows in each group. LINQ provides the same functionality.

To retrieve data in a particular order, you can use the *OrderBy* method. Like the *Select* and *Where* methods, *OrderBy* expects a method as its argument. This method identifies the expressions that you want to use to sort the data. For example, you can display the name of each company in the *addresses* array in ascending order, like this:

```
IEnumerable<string> companyNames =  
    addresses.OrderBy(addr => addr.CompanyName).Select(comp => comp.CompanyName);  
foreach (string name in companyNames)  
{  
    Console.WriteLine(name);  
}
```

This block of code displays the companies in the *addresses* table in alphabetical order.

Alpine Ski House  
Coho Winery  
Trey Research  
Wide World Importers  
Wingtip Toys

If you want to enumerate the data in descending order, you can use the *OrderByDescending* method, instead. If you want to order by more than one key value, you can use the *ThenBy* or *ThenByDescending* method after *OrderBy* or *OrderByDescending*.

To group data according to common values in one or more fields, you can use the *GroupBy* method. The following example shows how to group the companies in the *addresses* array by country:

```
var companiesGroupedByCountry =  
    addresses.GroupBy(addr => addr.Country);  
foreach (var companiesPerCountry in companiesGroupedByCountry)  
{  
    Console.WriteLine("Country: {0}\t{1} companies",  
        companiesPerCountry.Key, companiesPerCountry.Count());  
    foreach (var companies in companiesPerCountry)  
    {  
        Console.WriteLine("\t{0}", companies.CompanyName);  
    }  
}
```

By now, you should recognize the pattern. The *GroupBy* method expects a method that specifies the fields by which to group the data. There are some subtle differences between the *GroupBy* method and the other methods that you have seen so far, though.

The main point of interest is that you don't need to use the *Select* method to project the fields to the result. The enumerable set returned by *GroupBy* contains all the fields in the original source collection, but the rows are ordered into a set of enumerable collections based on the field identified by the method specified by *GroupBy*. In other words, the result of the *GroupBy* method is an enumerable set of groups, each of which is an enumerable set of rows. In the example just shown, the enumerable set *companiesGroupedByCountry* is a set of countries. The items in this set are themselves enumerable collections containing the

companies for each country in turn. The code that displays the companies in each country uses a *foreach* loop to iterate through the *companiesGroupedByCountry* set to yield and display each country in turn, and then it uses a nested *foreach* loop to iterate through the set of companies in each country. Notice in the outer *foreach* loop that you can access the value you are grouping by using the *Key* field of each item, and you can also calculate summary data for each group by using methods such as *Count*, *Max*, *Min*, and many others. The output generated by the example code looks like this:

```
Country: Switzerland    1 companies
    Alpine Ski House
Country: United States  2 companies
    Coho Winery
    Trey Research
Country: United Kingdom 2 companies
    Wingtip Toys
    Wide World Importers
```

You can use many of the summary methods such as *Count*, *Max*, and *Min* directly over the results of the *Select* method. If you want to know how many companies there are in the *addresses* array, you can use a block of code such as this:

```
int numberOfCompanies = addresses.Select(addr => addr.CompanyName).Count();
Console.WriteLine("Number of companies: {0}", numberOfCompanies);
```

Notice that the result of these methods is a single scalar value rather than an enumerable collection. The output from the preceding block of code looks like this:

```
Number of companies: 5
```

I should utter a word of caution at this point. These summary methods do not distinguish between rows in the underlying set that contain duplicate values in the fields you are projecting. This means that, strictly speaking, the preceding example shows you only how many rows in the *addresses* array contain a value in the *CompanyName* field. If you wanted to find out how many different countries are mentioned in this table, you might be tempted to try this:

```
int numberOfCountries = addresses.Select(addr => addr.Country).Count();
Console.WriteLine("Number of countries: {0}", numberOfCountries);
```

The output looks like this:

```
Number of countries: 5
```

In fact, there are only three different countries in the *addresses* array—it just so happens that United States and United Kingdom both occur twice. You can eliminate duplicates from the calculation by using the *Distinct* method, like this:

```
int numberOfCountries =
    addresses.Select(addr => addr.Country).Distinct().Count();
Console.WriteLine("Number of countries: {0}", numberOfCountries);
```

The *Console.WriteLine* statement now outputs the expected result:

```
Number of countries: 3
```

## Joining data

Just like SQL, LINQ gives you the ability to join multiple sets of data together over one or more common key fields. The following example shows how to display the first and last names of each customer, together with the name of the country where the customer is located:

```
var companiesAndCustomers = customers
    .Select(c => new { c.FirstName, c.LastName, c.CompanyName })
    .Join(addresses, custs => custs.CompanyName, addrs => addrs.CompanyName,
        (custs, addrs) => new {custs.FirstName, custs.LastName, addrs.Country });
foreach (var row in companiesAndCustomers)
{
    Console.WriteLine(row);
}
```

The customers' first and last names are available in the *customers* array, but the country for each company that customers work for is stored in the *addresses* array. The common key between the *customers* array and the *addresses* array is the company name. The *Select* method specifies the fields of interest in the *customers* array (*FirstName* and *LastName*), together with the field containing

the common key (*CompanyName*). You use the *Join* method to join the data identified by the *Select* method with another enumerable collection. The parameters to the *Join* method are as follows:

- The enumerable collection with which to join
- A method that identifies the common key fields from the data identified by the *Select* method
- A method that identifies the common key fields on which to join the selected data
- A method that specifies the columns you require in the enumerable result set returned by the *Join* method

In this example, the *Join* method joins the enumerable collection containing the *FirstName*, *LastName*, and *CompanyName* fields from the *customers* array with the rows in the *addresses* array. The two sets of data are joined where the value in the *CompanyName* field in the *customers* array matches the value in the *CompanyName* field in the *addresses* array. The result set comprises rows containing the *FirstName* and *LastName* fields from the *customers* array with the *Country* field from the *addresses* array. The code that outputs the data from the *companiesAndCustomers* collection displays the following information:

```
{ FirstName = Kim, LastName = Abercrombie, Country = Switzerland }
{ FirstName = Jeff, LastName = Hay, Country = United States }
{ FirstName = Charlie, LastName = Herb, Country = Switzerland }
{ FirstName = Chris, LastName = Preston, Country = United States }
{ FirstName = Dave, LastName = Barnett, Country = United Kingdom }
{ FirstName = Ann, LastName = Beebe, Country = United States }
{ FirstName = John, LastName = Kane, Country = United Kingdom }
{ FirstName = David, LastName = Simpson, Country = United States }
{ FirstName = Greg, LastName = Chapman, Country = United Kingdom }
{ FirstName = Tim, LastName = Litton, Country = United Kingdom }
```

#### NOTE

Remember that collections in memory are not the same as tables in a relational database, and the data they contain is not subject to the same data integrity constraints. In a relational database, it could be acceptable to assume that every customer has a corresponding company and that each company has its own unique address. Collections do not enforce the same level

of data integrity, meaning that you can quite easily have a customer referencing a company that does not exist in the *addresses* array, and you might even have the same company occurring more than once in the *addresses* array. In these situations, the results that you obtain might be accurate but unexpected. Join operations work best when you fully understand the relationships between the data you are joining.

## Using query operators

The preceding sections have shown you many of the features available for querying in-memory data by using the extension methods for the *Enumerable* class defined in the *System.Linq* namespace. The syntax makes use of several advanced C# language features, and the resultant code can sometimes be quite hard to understand and maintain. To relieve you of some of this burden, the designers of C# added query operators to the language with which you can employ LINQ features by using a syntax more akin to SQL.

As you saw in the examples shown earlier in this chapter, you can retrieve the first name for each customer, like this:

```
IEnumerable<string> customerFirstNames =  
    customers.Select(cust => cust.FirstName);
```

You can rephrase this statement by using the *from* and *select* query operators, like this:

```
var customerFirstNames = from cust in customers  
    select cust.FirstName;
```

At compile time, the C# compiler resolves this expression into the corresponding *Select* method. The *from* operator defines an alias for the source collection, and the *select* operator specifies the fields to retrieve by using this alias. The result is an enumerable collection of customer first names. If you are familiar with SQL, notice that the *from* operator occurs before the *select* operator.

Continuing in the same vein, to retrieve the first and last names for each customer, you can use the following statement. (You might want to refer to the earlier example of the same statement based on the *Select* extension method.)

```
var customerNames = from cust in customers  
    select new { cust.FirstName, cust.LastName };
```

```
select new { east.FirstName, east.LastName },
```

You use the *where* operator to filter data. The following example shows how to return the names of the companies based in the United States from the *addresses* array:

```
var usCompanies = from a in addresses
                  where String.Equals(a.Country, "United States")
                  select a.CompanyName;
```

To order data, use the *orderby* operator, like this:

```
var companyNames = from a in addresses
                  orderby a.CompanyName
                  select a.CompanyName;
```

You can group data by using the *group* operator in the following manner:

```
var companiesGroupedByCountry = from a in addresses
                                group a by a.Country;
```

Notice that, as with the earlier example showing how to group data, you do not provide the *select* operator, and you can iterate through the results by using exactly the same code as the earlier example, like this:

```
foreach (var companiesPerCountry in companiesGroupedByCountry)
{
    Console.WriteLine("Country: {0}\t{1} companies",
        companiesPerCountry.Key, companiesPerCountry.Count());
    foreach (var companies in companiesPerCountry)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("\t{0}", companies.CompanyName);
    }
}
```

You can invoke the summary functions such as *Count* over the collection returned by an enumerable collection, like this:

```
int numberOfCompanies = (from a in addresses
                        select a.CompanyName).Count();
```

Notice that you wrap the expression in parentheses. If you want to ignore duplicate values, use the *Distinct* method:

```
int numberOfCountries = (from a in addresses
                        select a.Country).Distinct().Count();
```

#### TIP

In many cases, you probably want to count just the number of rows in a collection rather than the number of values in a field across all the rows in the collection. In this case, you can invoke the *Count* method directly over the original collection, like this:

```
int numberOfCompanies = addresses.Count();
```

You can use the *join* operator to combine two collections across a common key. The following example shows the query returning customers and addresses over the *CompanyName* column in each collection, this time rephrased using the *join* operator. You use the *on* clause with the *equals* operator to specify how the two collections are related.

#### NOTE

LINQ currently supports equi-joins (joins based on equality) only. If you are a database developer who is used to SQL, you might be familiar with joins based on other operators such as *>* and *<*, but LINQ does not provide these features.

```
var countriesAndCustomers = from a in addresses
                            join c in customers
                            on a.CompanyName equals c.CompanyName
                            select new { c.FirstName, c.LastName, a.Country };
```

#### NOTE

In contrast with SQL, the order of the expressions in the *on* clause of a LINQ expression is important. You must place the item you are joining from (referencing the data in the collection in the *from* clause) to the left of the *equals* operator and the item you are joining with (referencing the data in the collection in the *join* clause) to the right.



LINQ provides a large number of other methods for summarizing information, joining, grouping, and searching through data. This section has covered just the most common features. For example, LINQ provides the *Intersect* and *Union* methods, which you can use to perform setwise operations. It also provides methods such as *Any* and *All* that you can use to determine whether at least one item in a collection or every item in a collection matches a specified predicate. You can partition the values in an enumerable collection by using the *Take* and *Skip* methods. For more information, see the material in the LINQ section of the documentation provided with Visual Studio 2013.

## Querying data in *Tree<TItem>* objects

The examples you've seen so far in this chapter have shown how to query the data in an array. You can use exactly the same techniques for any collection class that implements the generic *IEnumerable<T>* interface. In the following exercise, you will define a new class for modeling employees for a company. You will create a *BinaryTree* object containing a collection of *Employee* objects, and then you will use LINQ to query this information. You will initially call the LINQ extension methods directly, but then you will modify your code to use query operators.

Retrieve data from a *BinaryTree* by using the extension methods

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the QueryBinaryTree solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 21\Windows X\QueryBinaryTree folder in your Documents folder. The project contains the Program.cs file, which defines the *Program* class with the *Main* and *doWork* methods that you saw in previous exercises.
3. In Solution Explorer, right-click the QueryBinaryTree project, point to Add, and then click Class. In the Add New Item – Query BinaryTree dialog box, in the Name box, type **Employee.cs** and then click Add.
4. Add the automatic properties shown below in bold to the *Employee* class:

```
class Employee
{
```

```

        public string FirstName { get; set; }
        public string LastName { get; set; }
        public string Department { get; set; }
        public int Id { get; set; }
    }

```

5. Add the *ToString* method shown in bold in the code that follows to the *Employee* class. Types in the .NET Framework use this method when converting the object to a string representation, such as when displaying it by using the *Console.WriteLine* statement.

```

class Employee
{
    ...
    public override string ToString()
    {
        return String.Format("Id: {0}, Name: {1} {2}, Dept: {3}",
            this.Id, this.FirstName, this.LastName, this.Department);
    }
}

```

6. Modify the definition of the *Employee* class to implement the *IComparable<Employee>* interface, as shown here:

```

class Employee : IComparable<Employee>
{
}

```

This step is necessary because the *BinaryTree* class specifies that its elements must be “comparable.”

7. Right-click the *IComparable<Employee>* interface in the class definition, point to Implement Interface, and then click Implement Interface Explicitly.

This action generates a default implementation of the *CompareTo* method. Remember that the *BinaryTree* class calls this method when it needs to compare elements when inserting them into the tree.

8. Replace the body of the *CompareTo* method with the code that follows shown in bold. This implementation of the *CompareTo* method compares

*Employee* objects based on the value of the *Id* field.

```
int IComparable<Employee>.CompareTo(Employee other)
{
    if (other == null)
    {
        return 1;
    }
    if (this.Id > other.Id)
    {
        return 1;
    }
    if (this.Id < other.Id)
    {
        return -1;
    }
    return 0;
}
```

**NOTE**

For a description of the *IComparable<T>* interface, refer to [Chapter 19](#).

9. In Solution Explorer, right-click the QueryBinaryTree solution, point to Add, and then click Existing Project. In the Add Existing Project dialog box, move to the folder Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 21\Windows X\BinaryTree in your Documents folder, click the BinaryTree project, and then click Open.

The BinaryTree project contains a copy of the enumerable *BinaryTree* class that you implemented in [Chapter 19](#).

10. In Solution Explorer, right-click the QueryBinaryTree project, and then, on the shortcut menu that opens, click Add Reference. In the Reference Manager – QueryBinaryTree dialog box, in the left pane, click Solution. In the middle pane, select the BinaryTree project, and then click OK.
11. Display the Program.cs file for the QueryBinaryTree project in the Code and Text Editor window, and verify that the list of *using* directives at the top of the file includes the following line of code:

```
using System.Linq;
```

12. Add the following *using* directive that brings the *BinaryTree* namespace into scope to the list at the top of the Program.cs file:

```
using BinaryTree;
```

13. In the *doWork* method in the *Program* class, remove the *// TODO:* comment and add the following statements shown in bold type to construct and populate an instance of the *BinaryTree* class:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Tree<Employee> empTree = new Tree<Employee>(
        new Employee { Id = 1, FirstName = "Kim", LastName = "Abercrombie",
                        Department = "IT" });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 2, FirstName = "Jeff", LastName = "Hay",
                                    Department = "Marketing"
    });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 4, FirstName = "Charlie", LastName =
    "Herb",
                                    Department = "IT" });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 6, FirstName = "Chris", LastName =
    "Preston",
                                    Department = "Sales"});
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 3, FirstName = "Dave", LastName =
    "Barnett",
                                    Department = "Sales" });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 5, FirstName = "Tim", LastName =
    "Litton",
                                    Department="Marketing" });}
```

14. Add the following statements shown in bold to the end of the *doWork* method. This code invokes the *Select* method to list the departments found in the binary tree.

```
static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Console.WriteLine("List of departments");
    var depts = empTree.Select(d => d.Department);
    foreach (var dept in depts)
```

```

    {
        Console.WriteLine("Department: {0}", dept);
    }
}

```

15. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The application should output the following list of departments:

```

List of departments
Department: IT
Department: Marketing
Department: Sales
Department: IT
Department: Marketing
Department: Sales

```

Each department occurs twice because there are two employees in each department. The order of the departments is determined by the *CompareTo* method of the *Employee* class, which uses the *Id* property of each employee to sort the data. The first department is for the employee with the *Id* value 1, the second department is for the employee with the *Id* value 2, and so on.

16. Press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.
17. In the *doWork* method in the *Program* class, modify the statement that creates the enumerable collection of departments as shown in bold in the following example:

```

var depts = empTree.Select(d => d.Department).Distinct();

```

The *Distinct* method removes duplicate rows from the enumerable collection.

18. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Verify that the application now displays each department only once, like this:

```

List of departments

```

```
Department: IT
Department: Marketing
Department: Sales
```

19. Press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.
20. Add the following statements shown in bold to the end of the *doWork* method. This block of code uses the *Where* method to filter the employees and return only those in the IT department. The *Select* method returns the entire row rather than projecting specific columns.

```
static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Console.WriteLine("\nEmployees in the IT department");
    var ITEmployees =
        empTree.Where(e => String.Equals(e.Department, "IT"))
        .Select(emp => emp);
    foreach (var emp in ITEmployees)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(emp);
    }
}
```

21. Add the code shown below in bold to the end of the *doWork* method, after the code from the preceding step. This code uses the *GroupBy* method to group the employees found in the binary tree by department. The outer *foreach* statement iterates through each group, displaying the name of the department. The inner *foreach* statement displays the names of the employees in each department.

```
static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Console.WriteLine("\nAll employees grouped by department");
    var employeesByDept = empTree.GroupBy(e => e.Department);
    foreach (var dept in employeesByDept)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Department: {0}", dept.Key);
        foreach (var emp in dept)
        {
            Console.WriteLine("\t{0} {1}", emp.FirstName, emp.LastName);
        }
    }
}
```

```

    }
  }
}

```

22. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the output of the application looks like this:

```

List of departments
Department: IT
Department: Marketing
Department: Sales
Employees in the IT department
Id: 1, Name: Kim Abercrombie, Dept: IT
Id: 4, Name: Charlie Herb, Dept: IT
All employees grouped by department
Department: IT
    Kim Abercrombie
    Charlie Herb
Department: Marketing
    Jeff Hay
    Tim Litton
Department: Sales
    Dave Barnett
    Chris Preston

```

23. Press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.

Retrieve data from a *BinaryTree* by using query operators

1. In the *doWork* method, comment out the statement that generates the enumerable collection of departments, and replace it with the equivalent statement shown in bold, using the *from* and *select* query operators:

```

// var depts = empTree.Select(d => d.Department).Distinct();
var depts = (from d in empTree
              select d.Department).Distinct();

```

2. Comment out the statement that generates the enumerable collection of employees in the IT department, and replace it with the following code shown in bold:

```

// var ITEmployees =

```

```
// empTree.Where(e => String.Equals(e.Department, "IT"))
// .Select(emp => emp);
var ITEmployees = from e in empTree
    where String.Equals(e.Department, "IT")
    select e;
```

3. Comment out the statement that generates the enumerable collection grouping employees by department, and replace it with the statement shown in bold in the following code:

```
// var employeesByDept = empTree.GroupBy(e => e.Department);
var employeesByDept = from e in empTree
    group e by e.Department;
```

4. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the program displays the same results as before.

```
List of departments
Department: IT
Department: Marketing
Department: Sales
Employees in the IT department
Id: 1, Name: Kim Abercrombie, Dept: IT
Id: 4, Name: Charlie Herb, Dept: IT
All employees grouped by department
Department: IT
    Kim Abercrombie
    Charlie Herb
Department: Marketing
    Jeff Hay
    Tim Litton
Department: Sales
    Dave Barnett
    Chris Preston
```

5. Press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.

## LINQ and deferred evaluation

When you use LINQ to define an enumerable collection, either by using the LINQ extension methods or by using query operators, you should remember that the application does not actually build the collection at the time that the LINQ



extension method is executed; the collection is enumerated only when you iterate over it. This means that the data in the original collection can change between executing a LINQ query and retrieving the data that the query identifies; you will always fetch the most up-to-date data. For example, the following query (which you saw earlier) defines an enumerable collection of companies in the United States:

```
var usCompanies = from a in addresses
                  where String.Equals(a.Country, "United States")
                  select a.CompanyName;
```

The data in the *addresses* array is not retrieved, and any conditions specified in the *Where* filter are not evaluated until you iterate through the *usCompanies* collection:

```
foreach (string name in usCompanies)
{
    Console.WriteLine(name);
}
```

If you modify the data in the *addresses* array between defining the *usCompanies* collection and iterating through the collection (for example, if you add a new company based in the United States), you will see this new data. This strategy is referred to as *deferred evaluation*.

You can force evaluation of a LINQ query when it is defined and generate a static, cached collection. This collection is a copy of the original data and will not change if the data in the collection changes. LINQ provides the *ToList* method to build a static *List* object containing a cached copy of the data. You use it like this:

```
var usCompanies = from a in addresses.ToList()
                  where String.Equals(a.Country, "United States")
                  select a.CompanyName;
```

This time, the list of companies is fixed when you create the query. If you add more United States companies to the *addresses* array, you will not see them when you iterate through the *usCompanies* collection. LINQ also provides the *ToArray* method that stores the cached collection as an array.

In the final exercise in this chapter, you will compare the effects of using deferred evaluation of a LINQ query to generating a cached collection. Examine the effects of deferred and cached evaluation of a LINQ query

1. Return to Visual Studio 2013, display the QueryBinaryTree project, and then edit the Program.cs file.
2. Comment out the contents of the *doWork* method apart from the statements that construct the *empTree* binary tree, as shown here:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Tree<Employee> empTree = new Tree<Employee>(
        new Employee { Id = 1, FirstName = "Kim", LastName = "Abercrombie",
                      Department = "IT" });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 2, FirstName = "Jeff", LastName =
"Hay",
                                Department = "Marketing" });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 4, FirstName = "Charlie", LastName =
"Herb",
                                Department = "IT" });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 6, FirstName = "Chris", LastName =
"Preston",
                                Department = "Sales"});
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 3, FirstName = "Dave", LastName =
"Barnett",
                                Department = "Sales" });
    empTree.Insert( new Employee { Id = 5, FirstName = "Tim", LastName =
"Litton",
                                Department="Marketing" });

    // comment out the rest of the method
    ...
}
```

#### TIP

You can comment out a block of code by selecting the entire block in the Code and Text Editor window and then clicking the Comment Out The Selected Lines button on the toolbar or by pressing Ctrl+E and then pressing C.

3. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *doWork* method, after the code that creates and populates the *empTree* binary tree:

```

static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Console.WriteLine("All employees");
    var allEmployees = from e in empTree
                        select e;
    foreach (var emp in allEmployees)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(emp);
    }
    ...
}

```

This code generates an enumerable collection of employees named *allEmployees* and then iterates through this collection, displaying the details of each employee.

4. Add the following code immediately after the statements you typed in the preceding step:

```

static void doWork()
{
    ...
    empTree.Insert(new Employee
    {
        Id = 7,
        FirstName = "David",
        LastName = "Simpson",
        Department = "IT"
    });
    Console.WriteLine("\nEmployee added");
    Console.WriteLine("All employees");
    foreach (var emp in allEmployees)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(emp);
    }
    ...
}

```

These statements add a new employee to the *empTree* tree and then iterate through the *allEmployees* collection again.

5. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the output

of the application looks like this:

```
All employees
Id: 1, Name: Kim Abercrombie, Dept: IT
Id: 2, Name: Jeff Hay, Dept: Marketing
Id: 3, Name: Dave Barnett, Dept: Sales
Id: 4, Name: Charlie Herb, Dept: IT
Id: 5, Name: Tim Litton, Dept: Marketing
Id: 6, Name: Chris Preston, Dept: Sales
Employee added
All employees
Id: 1, Name: Kim Abercrombie, Dept: IT
Id: 2, Name: Jeff Hay, Dept: Marketing
Id: 3, Name: Dave Barnett, Dept: Sales
Id: 4, Name: Charlie Herb, Dept: IT
Id: 5, Name: Tim Litton, Dept: Marketing
Id: 6, Name: Chris Preston, Dept: Sales
Id: 7, Name: David Simpson, Dept: IT
```

Notice that the second time the application iterates through the *allEmployees* collection, the list displayed includes David Simpson, even though this employee was added only after the *allEmployees* collection was defined.

6. Press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.
7. In the *doWork* method, change the statement that generates the *allEmployees* collection to identify and cache the data immediately, as shown here in bold:

```
var allEmployees = from e in empTree.ToList<Employee>()
                    select e;
```

LINQ provides generic and nongeneric versions of the *ToList* and *ToArray* methods. If possible, it is better to use the generic versions of these methods to ensure the type safety of the result. The data returned by the *select* operator is an *Employee* object, and the code shown in this step generates *allEmployees* as a generic *List<Employee>* collection. If you specify the nongeneric *ToList* method, the *allEmployees* collection will be a *List* of *object* types.

8. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the output of the application looks like this:

```
All employees
Id: 1, Name: Kim Abercrombie, Dept: IT
Id: 2, Name: Jeff Hay, Dept: Marketing
Id: 3, Name: Dave Barnett, Dept: Sales
Id: 4, Name: Charlie Herb, Dept: IT
Id: 5, Name: Tim Litton, Dept: Marketing
Id: 6, Name: Chris Preston, Dept: Sales
Employee added
All employees
Id: 1, Name: Kim Abercrombie, Dept: IT
Id: 2, Name: Jeff Hay, Dept: Marketing
Id: 3, Name: Dave Barnett, Dept: Sales
Id: 4, Name: Charlie Herb, Dept: IT
Id: 5, Name: Tim Litton, Dept: Marketing
Id: 6, Name: Chris Preston, Dept: Sales
```

Notice that the second time the application iterates through the *allEmployees* collection, the list displayed does not include David Simpson. This is because the query is evaluated and the results are cached before David Simpson is added to the *empTree* binary tree.

9. Press Enter to return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how LINQ uses the *IEnumerable<T>* interface and extension methods to provide a mechanism for querying data. You also saw how these features support the query expression syntax in C#.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 22](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

---

| To   | Do this   |
|--|---|
| Project specified fields from an enumerable collection | <p>Use the <i>Select</i> method and specify a lambda expression that identifies the fields to project. For example:</p> <pre>var customerFirstNames = customers.Select(cust =&gt; cust.FirstName);</pre> <p>Or use the <i>from</i> and <i>select</i> query operators. For example:</p> <pre>var customerFirstNames =     from cust in customers     select cust.FirstName;</pre>  |
| Filter rows from an enumerable collection              | <p>Use the <i>Where</i> method, and specify a lambda expression containing the criteria that rows should match. For example:</p> <pre>var usCompanies =     addresses.Where(addr =&gt;         String.Equals(addr.Country, "United States"))         .Select(usComp =&gt; usComp.CompanyName);</pre> <p>Or use the <i>where</i> query operator. For example:</p> <pre>var usCompanies =     from a in addresses     where String.Equals(a.Country, "United States")     select a.CompanyName;</pre> |
| Enumerate data in a specific order                     | <p>Use the <i>OrderBy</i> method and specify a lambda expression identifying the field to use to order rows. For example:</p> <pre>var companyNames =     addresses.OrderBy(addr =&gt; addr.CompanyName)         .Select(comp =&gt; comp.CompanyName);</pre> <p>Or, use the <i>orderby</i> query operator. For example:</p> <pre>var companyNames =     from a in addresses     orderby a.CompanyName</pre>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <pre>select a.CompanyName;</pre>   |
| Group data by the values in a field                        | <p>Use the <i>GroupBy</i> method and specify a lambda expression identifying the field to use to group rows. For example:</p> <pre>var companiesGroupedByCountry =     addresses.GroupBy(addr =&gt; addr.Country);</pre> <p>Or, use the <i>group by</i> query operator. For example:</p> <pre>var companiesGroupedByCountry =     from a in addresses     group a by a.Country;</pre>  |
| Join data held in two different collections                | <p>Use the <i>Join</i> method, specifying the collection with which to join, the join criteria, and the fields for the result. For example:</p> <pre>var countriesAndCustomers =     customers     .Select(c =&gt; new { c.FirstName, c.LastName,         c.CompanyName }).     Join(addresses, custs =&gt; custs.CompanyName,         addr =&gt; addr.CompanyName,         (custs, addr) =&gt; new {custs.FirstName,             custs.LastName, addr.Country });</pre> <p>Or, use the <i>join</i> query operator. For example:</p> <pre>var countriesAndCustomers =     from a in addresses     join c in customers     on a.CompanyName equals c.CompanyName     select new { c.FirstName, c.LastName, a.Country     };</pre> |
| Force immediate generation of the results for a LINQ query | <p>Use the <i>ToList</i> or <i>ToArray</i> method to generate a list or an array containing the results. For example:</p> <pre>var allEmployees =     from e in empTree.ToList&lt;Employee&gt;()     select e;</pre>   |





# Chapter 22. Operator overloading

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- **Understanding operators**
- Implement unary operators for your own types.
- **Declaring increment and decrement operators**
- **Defining operator pairs**
- **Implementing operators**
- Implement explicit conversion operators for your own types.

The examples throughout this book make a great deal of use of the standard operator symbols (such as `+` and `-`) to perform standard operations (such as addition and subtraction) on types (such as *int* and *double*). Many of the built-in types come with their own predefined behaviors for each operator. You can also define how operators should behave for your own structures and classes, which is the subject of this chapter.

## Understanding operators

It is worth recapping some of the fundamental aspects of operators before delving into the details of how they work and how you can overload them. The following list summarizes these aspects:

- You use operators to combine operands together into expressions. Each operator has its own semantics, dependent on the type with which it works. For example, the `+` operator means “add” when you use it with numeric types, or it means “concatenate” when you use it with strings.

- Each operator has a *precedence*. For example, the `*` operator has a higher precedence than the `+` operator. This means that the expression  $a + b * c$  is the same as  $a + (b * c)$ .
- Each operator also has an *associativity* to define whether the operator evaluates from left to right or from right to left. For example, the `=` operator is right-associative (it evaluates from right to left), so  $a = b = c$  is the same as  $a = (b = c)$ .
- A *unary operator* is an operator that has just one operand. For example, the increment operator `(++)` is a unary operator.
- A *binary operator* is an operator that has two operands. For example, the multiplication operator `(*)` is a binary operator.

## Operator constraints

This book presents many examples of how with C# you can overload methods when defining your own types. With C#, you can also overload many of the existing operator symbols for your own types, although the syntax is slightly different. When you do this, the operators you implement automatically fall into a well-defined framework with the following rules:

- You cannot change the precedence and associativity of an operator. The precedence and associativity are based on the operator symbol (for example, `+`) and not on the type (for example, `int`) on which the operator symbol is being used. Hence, the expression  $a + b * c$  is always the same as  $a + (b * c)$ , regardless of the types of  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$ .
- You cannot change the multiplicity (the number of operands) of an operator. For example, `*` (the symbol for multiplication) is a binary operator. If you declare a `*` operator for your own type, it must be a binary operator.
- You cannot invent new operator symbols. For example, you can't create a new operator symbol, such as `**` for raising one number to the power of another number. You'd have to create a method to do that.
- You can't change the meaning of operators when applied to built-in types.

For example, the expression  $1 + 2$  has a predefined meaning, and you're not allowed to override this meaning. If you could do this, things would be too complicated.

- There are some operator symbols that you can't overload. For example, you can't overload the dot (.) operator, which indicates access to a class member. Again, if you could do this, it would lead to unnecessary complexity.

#### TIP

You can use indexers to simulate `[ ]` as an operator. Similarly, you can use properties to simulate assignment (`=`) as an operator, and you can use delegates to mimic a function call as an operator.

## Overloaded operators

To define your own operator behavior, you must overload a selected operator. You use method-like syntax with a return type and parameters, but the name of the method is the keyword `operator` together with the *operator* symbol you are declaring. For example, the following code shows a user-defined structure named *Hour* that defines a binary `+` operator to add together two instances of *Hour*:

```
struct Hour
{
    public Hour(int initialValue)
    {
        this.value = initialValue;
    }
    public static Hour operator +(Hour lhs, Hour rhs)
    {
        return new Hour(lhs.value + rhs.value);
    }
    ...
    private int value;
}
```

Notice the following:

- The operator is *public*. All operators *must* be public.

- The operator is *static*. All operators *must* be static. Operators are never polymorphic and cannot use the *virtual*, *abstract*, *override*, or *sealed* modifiers.
- A binary operator (such as the + operator shown earlier) has two explicit arguments, and a unary operator has one explicit argument. (C++ programmers should note that operators never have a hidden *this* parameter.)

#### TIP

When declaring highly stylized functionality (such as operators), it is useful to adopt a naming convention for the parameters. For example, developers often use *lhs* and *rhs* (acronyms for left-hand side and right-hand side, respectively) for binary operators.

When you use the + operator on two expressions of type *Hour*, the C# compiler automatically converts your code to a call to your *operator +* method. The C# compiler transforms this code

```
Hour Example(Hour a, Hour b)
{
    return a + b;
}
```

to this:

```
Hour Example(Hour a, Hour b)
{
    return Hour.operator +(a,b); // pseudocode
}
```

Note, however, that this syntax is pseudocode and not valid C#. You can use a binary operator only in its standard infix notation (with the symbol between the operands).

There is one final rule that you must follow when declaring an operator: at least one of the parameters must always be of the containing type. In the preceding *operator+* example for the *Hour* class, one of the parameters, *a* or *b*, must be an *Hour* object. In this example, both parameters are *Hour* objects. However, there

could be times when you want to define additional implementations of *operator+* that add, for example, an integer (a number of hours) to an *Hour* object—the first parameter could be *Hour*, and the second parameter could be the integer. This rule makes it easier for the compiler to know where to look when trying to resolve an operator invocation, and it also ensures that you can't change the meaning of the built-in operators.

## Creating symmetric operators

In the preceding section, you saw how to declare a binary *+* operator to add together two instances of type *Hour*. The *Hour* structure also has a constructor that creates an *Hour* from an *int*. This means that you can add together an *Hour* and an *int*; you just have to first use the *Hour* constructor to convert the *int* to an *Hour*, as in the following example:

```
Hour a = ...;
int b = ...;
Hour sum = a + new Hour(b);
```

This is certainly valid code, but it is not as clear or concise as adding together an *Hour* and an *int* directly, like this:

```
Hour a = ...;
int b = ...;
Hour sum = a + b;
```

To make the expression  $(a + b)$  valid, you must specify what it means to add together an *Hour* (*a*, on the left) and an *int* (*b*, on the right). In other words, you must declare a binary *+* operator whose first parameter is an *Hour* and whose second parameter is an *int*. The following code shows the recommended approach:

```
struct Hour
{
    public Hour(int initialValue)
    {
        this.value = initialValue;
    }
    ...
    public static Hour operator +(Hour lhs, Hour rhs)
```

```

    public static Hour operator +(Hour lhs, Hour rhs)
    {
        return new Hour(lhs.value + rhs.value);
    }
    public static Hour operator +(Hour lhs, int rhs)
    {
        return lhs + new Hour(rhs);
    }
    ...
    private int value;
}

```

Notice that all the second version of the operator does is construct an *Hour* from its *int* argument and then call the first version. In this way, the real logic behind the operator is held in a single place. The point is that the extra *operator+* simply makes existing functionality easier to use. Also, notice that you should not provide many different versions of this operator, each with a different second parameter type; instead, cater to the common and meaningful cases only, and let the user of the class take any additional steps if an unusual case is required.

This *operator+* declares how to add together an *Hour* as the left operand and an *int* as the right operand. It does not declare how to add together an *int* as the left operand and an *Hour* as the right operand:

```

int a = ...;
Hour b = ...;
Hour sum = a + b; // compile-time error

```

This is counterintuitive. If you can write the expression  $a + b$ , you expect to also be able to write  $b + a$ . Therefore, you should provide another overload of *operator+*:

```

struct Hour
{
    public Hour(int initialValue)
    {
        this.value = initialValue;
    }
    ...
    public static Hour operator +(Hour lhs, int rhs)
    {
        return lhs + new Hour(rhs);
    }
}

```

```

    public static Hour operator +(int lhs, Hour rhs)
    {
        return new Hour(lhs) + rhs;
    }
    ...
    private int value;
}

```

#### NOTE

C++ programmers should notice that you must provide the overload yourself. The compiler won't write the overload for you or silently swap the sequence of the two operands to find a matching operator.

**OPERATORS AND LANGUAGE INTEROPERABILITY NOT ALL LANGUAGES THAT EXECUTE USING THE COMMON LANGUAGE RUNTIME (CLR) SUPPORT OR UNDERSTAND OPERATOR OVERLOADING. IF YOU ARE CREATING CLASSES THAT YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO USE FROM OTHER LANGUAGES, IF YOU OVERLOAD AN OPERATOR, YOU SHOULD PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE MECHANISM THAT SUPPORTS THE SAME FUNCTIONALITY. FOR EXAMPLE, SUPPOSE THAT YOU IMPLEMENT *OPERATOR+* FOR THE *HOUR* STRUCTURE, SUCH AS IS ILLUSTRATED HERE:**

```

PUBLIC STATIC HOUR OPERATOR +(HOUR LHS, INT RHS)
{
    ...
}

```

**IF YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO USE YOUR CLASS FROM A MICROSOFT VISUAL BASIC APPLICATION, YOU SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE AN *ADD* METHOD THAT ACHIEVES THE SAME THING, AS DEMONSTRATED HERE:**

```

PUBLIC STATIC HOUR ADD(HOUR LHS, INT RHS)
{
    ...
}

```

## Understanding compound assignment evaluation

## Evaluation

A compound assignment operator (such as `+=`) is always evaluated in terms of its associated simple operator (such as `+`). In other words, the statement

```
a += b;
```

is automatically evaluated like this:

```
a = a + b;
```

In general, the expression  $a @ b$  (where  $@$  represents any valid operator) is always evaluated as  $a = a @ b$ . If you have overloaded the appropriate simple operator, the overloaded version is automatically called when you use its associated compound assignment operator, as is shown in the following example:

```
Hour a = ...;
int b = ...;
a += a; // same as a = a + a
a += b; // same as a = a + b
```

The first compound assignment expression ( $a += a$ ) is valid because  $a$  is of type *Hour*, and the *Hour* type declares a binary *operator+* whose parameters are both *Hour*. Similarly, the second compound assignment expression ( $a += b$ ) is also valid because  $a$  is of type *Hour* and  $b$  is of type *int*. The *Hour* type also declares a binary *operator+* whose first parameter is an *Hour* and whose second parameter is an *int*. Be aware, however, that you cannot write the expression  $b += a$  because that's the same as  $b = b + a$ . Although the addition is valid, the assignment is not, because there is no way to assign an *Hour* to the built-in *int* type.

## Declaring increment and decrement operators

With C#, you can declare your own version of the increment (`++`) and decrement (`--`) operators. The usual rules apply when declaring these operators: they must be public, they must be static, and they must be unary (they can take only a single parameter). Here is the increment operator for the *Hour* structure:



```

struct Hour
{
    ...
    public static Hour operator ++(Hour arg)
    {
        arg.value++;
        return arg;
    }
    ...
    private int value;
}

```

The increment and decrement operators are unique in that they can be used in prefix and postfix forms. C# cleverly uses the same single operator for both the prefix and postfix versions. The result of a postfix expression is the value of the operand *before* the expression takes place. In other words, the compiler effectively converts the code

```

Hour now = new Hour(9);
Hour postfix = now++;

```

to this:

```

Hour now = new Hour(9);
Hour postfix = now;
now = Hour.operator ++(now); // pseudocode, not valid C#

```

The result of a prefix expression is the return value of the operator, so the C# compiler effectively transforms the code

```

Hour now = new Hour(9);
Hour prefix = ++now;

```

to this:

```

Hour now = new Hour(9);
now = Hour.operator ++(now); // pseudocode, not valid C#
Hour prefix = now;

```

This equivalence means that the return type of the increment and decrement operators must be the same as the parameter type.

## Comparing operators in structures and classes

Be aware that the implementation of the increment operator in the *Hour* structure works only because *Hour* is a structure. If you change *Hour* into a class but leave the implementation of its increment operator unchanged, you will find that the postfix translation won't give the correct answer. If you remember that a class is a reference type and if you revisit the compiler translations explained earlier, you can see in the following example why the operators for the *Hour* class no longer function as expected:

```
Hour now = new Hour(9);
Hour postfix = now;
now = Hour.operator ++(now); // pseudocode, not valid C#
```

If *Hour* is a class, the assignment statement *postfix* = *now* makes the variable *postfix* refer to the same object as *now*. Updating *now* automatically updates *postfix*! If *Hour* is a structure, the assignment statement makes a copy of *now* in *postfix*, and any changes to *now* leave *postfix* unchanged, which is what you want.

The correct implementation of the increment operator when *Hour* is a class is as follows:

```
class Hour
{
    public Hour(int initialValue)
    {
        this.value = initialValue;
    }
    ...
    public static Hour operator ++(Hour arg)
    {
        return new Hour(arg.value + 1);
    }
    ...
    private int value;
}
```

Notice that *operator* ++ now creates a new object based on the data in the original. The data in the new object is incremented, but the data in the original is left unchanged. Although this works, the compiler translation of the increment

operator results in a new object being created each time it is used. This can be expensive in terms of memory use and garbage collection overhead. Therefore, it is recommended that you limit operator overloads when you define types. This recommendation applies to all operators, not just to the increment operator.

## Defining operator pairs

Some operators naturally come in pairs. For example, if you can compare two *Hour* values by using the `!=` operator, you would expect to be able to also compare two *Hour* values by using the `==` operator. The C# compiler enforces this very reasonable expectation by insisting that if you define either *operator ==* or *operator !=*, you must define them both. This neither-or-both rule also applies to the `<` and `>` operators and the `<=` and `>=` operators. The C# compiler does not write any of these operator partners for you. You must write them all explicitly yourself, regardless of how obvious they might seem. Here are the `==` and `!=` operators for the *Hour* structure:

```
struct Hour
{
    public Hour(int initialValue)
    {
        this.value = initialValue;
    }
    ...
    public static bool operator ==(Hour lhs, Hour rhs)
    {
        return lhs.value == rhs.value;
    }
    public static bool operator !=(Hour lhs, Hour rhs)
    {
        return lhs.value != rhs.value;
    }
    ...
    private int value;
}
```

The return type from these operators does not actually have to be Boolean. However, you would need to have a very good reason for using some other type, or these operators could become very confusing.

**OVERRIDING THE EQUALITY OPERATORS IF YOU DEFINE *OPERATOR ==* AND *OPERATOR !=* IN A CLASS, YOU SHOULD ALSO OVERRIDE THE *EQUALS* AND *GETHASHCODE* METHODS INHERITED FROM *SYSTEM.OBJECT* (OR *SYSTEM.VALUE TYPE* IF YOU ARE CREATING A STRUCTURE). THE *EQUALS* METHOD SHOULD EXHIBIT *EXACTLY* THE SAME BEHAVIOR AS *OPERATOR ==*. (YOU SHOULD DEFINE ONE IN TERMS OF THE OTHER.) THE *GETHASHCODE* METHOD IS USED BY OTHER CLASSES IN THE MICROSOFT .NET FRAMEWORK. (WHEN YOU USE AN OBJECT AS A KEY IN A HASH TABLE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE *GETHASHCODE* METHOD IS CALLED ON THE OBJECT TO HELP CALCULATE A HASH VALUE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE .NET FRAMEWORK REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION SUPPLIED WITH VISUAL STUDIO 2013.) ALL THIS METHOD NEEDS TO DO IS RETURN A DISTINGUISHING INTEGER VALUE. (DON'T RETURN THE SAME INTEGER FROM THE *GETHASHCODE* METHOD OF ALL YOUR OBJECTS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE THIS WILL NULLIFY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HASHING ALGORITHMS.)**

## Implementing operators

In the following exercise, you will develop a class that simulates complex numbers.

A complex number has two elements: a real component and an imaginary component. Typically, a complex number is represented in the form  $(x + yi)$ , where  $x$  is the real component and  $yi$  is the imaginary component. The values of  $x$  and  $y$  are regular integers, and  $i$  represents the square root of  $-1$  (hence the reason why  $yi$  is imaginary). Despite their rather obscure and theoretical feel, complex numbers have a large number of uses in the fields of electronics, applied mathematics, and physics, and in many aspects of engineering. If you want more information about how and why complex numbers are useful, Wikipedia provides a useful and informative article.

### NOTE

The Microsoft .NET Framework version 4.0 and later includes a type called *Complex* in the *System.Numerics* namespace that implements complex numbers, so there is no real need to define your own version of this type any more. However, it is still instructive to see how to implement some of the common operators for this type.

You will implement complex numbers as a pair of integers that represent the coefficients  $x$  and  $y$  for the real and imaginary elements. You will also implement the operators necessary for performing simple arithmetic using complex numbers. The following table summarizes how to perform the four primary arithmetic operations on a pair of complex numbers,  $(a + bi)$  and  $(c + di)$ .

| Operation             | Calculation   |
|-----------------------|---|
| $(a + bi) + (c + di)$ | $((a + c) + (b + d)i)$  |
| $(a + bi) - (c + di)$ | $((a - c) + (b - d)i)$  |
| $(a + bi) * (c + di)$ | $((a * c - b * d) + (b * c + a * d)i)$  |
| $(a + bi) / (c + di)$ | $(( (a * c + b * d) / (c * c + d * d)) + ((b * c - a * d) / (c * c + d * d))i)$ |

Create the *Complex* class and implement the arithmetic operators

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the ComplexNumbers project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 22\Windows X\ComplexNumbers folder in your Documents folder. This is a console application that you will use to build and test your code. The Program.cs file contains the familiar *doWork* method.
3. In Solution Explorer, click the ComplexNumbers project. On the Project menu, click Add Class. In the Add New Item – Complex Numbers dialog box, in the Name box, type **Complex.cs**, and then click Add.

Visual Studio creates the *Complex* class and opens the Complex.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.

4. Add the automatic properties *Real* and *Imaginary* to the *Complex* class, as shown in bold in the code that follows:

```
class Complex
{
    public int Real { get; set; }
    public int Imaginary { get; set; }
}
```

You will use these two properties to hold the real and imaginary components of a complex number.

5. Add the constructor shown below in bold to the *Complex* class:

```
class Complex
{
    ...
    public Complex (int real, int imaginary)
    {
        this.Real = real;
        this.Imaginary = imaginary;
    }
}
```

This constructor takes two *int* parameters and uses them to populate the *Real* and *Imaginary* properties.

6. Override the *ToString* method as shown next in bold:

```
class Complex
{
    ...
    public override string ToString()
    {
        return String.Format("{0} + {1}i", this.Real, this.Imaginary);
    }
}
```

This method returns a string representing the complex number in the form  $(x + yi)$ .

7. Add the overloaded  $+$  operator shown in bold in the code that follows to the *Complex* class:

```
class Complex
{
    ...
    public static Complex operator +(Complex lhs, Complex rhs)
    {
        return new Complex(lhs.Real + rhs.Real, lhs.Imaginary +
rhs.Imaginary);
    }
}
```

```

    }
}

```

This is the binary addition operator. It takes two *Complex* objects and adds them together by performing the calculation shown in the table at the start of the exercise. The operator returns a new *Complex* object containing the results of this calculation.

8. Add the overloaded – operator to the *Complex* class.

```

class Complex
{
    ...
    public static Complex operator -(Complex lhs, Complex rhs)
    {
        return new Complex(lhs.Real - rhs.Real, lhs.Imaginary -
rhs.Imaginary);
    }
}

```

This operator follows the same form as the overloaded + operator.

9. Implement the \* operator and the / operator.

```

class Complex
{
    ...
    public static Complex operator (Complex lhs, Complex rhs)
    {
        return new Complex(lhs.Real  rhs.Real - lhs.Imaginary  rhs.Imaginary,
lhs.Imaginary  rhs.Real + lhs.Real  rhs.Imaginary);
    }
    public static Complex operator /(Complex lhs, Complex rhs)
    {
        int realElement = (lhs.Real  rhs.Real + lhs.Imaginary  rhs.Imaginary) /
(rhs.Real  rhs.Real + rhs.Imaginary  rhs.Imaginary);
        int imaginaryElement = (lhs.Imaginary  rhs.Real - lhs.Real
rhs.Imaginary) /
(rhs.Real  rhs.Real + rhs.Imaginary * rhs.Imaginary);
        return new Complex(realElement, imaginaryElement);
    }
}

```

These two operators follow the same form as the previous two operators, although the calculations are a little more complicated. (The calculation for the / operator has been broken down into two steps to avoid lengthy lines of code.)

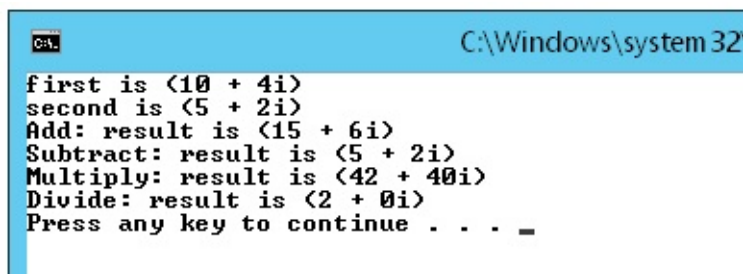
10. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *doWork* method of the *Program* class and delete the *// TODO:* comment:

```
static void doWork()
{
    Complex first = new Complex(10, 4);
    Complex second = new Complex(5, 2);
    Console.WriteLine("first is {0}", first);
    Console.WriteLine("second is {0}", second);
    Complex temp = first + second;
    Console.WriteLine("Add: result is {0}", temp);
    temp = first - second;
    Console.WriteLine("Subtract: result is {0}", temp);
    temp = first * second;
    Console.WriteLine("Multiply: result is {0}", temp);
    temp = first / second;
    Console.WriteLine("Divide: result is {0}", temp);
}
```

This code creates two *Complex* objects that represent the complex values  $(10 + 4i)$  and  $(5 + 2i)$ . The code displays them and then tests each of the operators you have just defined, displaying the results in each case.

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

Verify that the application displays the results shown in the following image:



```
first is <10 + 4i>
second is <5 + 2i>
Add: result is <15 + 6i>
Subtract: result is <5 + 2i>
Multiply: result is <42 + 40i>
Divide: result is <2 + 0i>
Press any key to continue . . . _
```

- Close the application, and return to the Visual Studio 2013 programming



environment.

You have now created a type that models complex numbers and supports basic arithmetic operations. In the next exercise, you will extend the *Complex* class and provide the equality operators, `==` and `!=`.

Implement the equality operators

1. In Visual Studio 2013, display the `Complex.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add the `==` and `!=` operators to the *Complex* class as shown in bold in the following example.

```
class Complex
{
    ...
    public static bool operator ==(Complex lhs, Complex rhs)
    {
        return lhs.Equals(rhs);
    }
    public static bool operator !=(Complex lhs, Complex rhs)
    {
        return !(lhs.Equals(rhs));
    }
}
```

Notice that these operators both make use of the *Equals* method. The *Equals* method compares an instance of a class against another instance specified as an argument. It returns *true* if they have equivalent values and *false* otherwise.

3. On the Build menu, click Rebuild Solution.

The Error List window displays the following warning messages:

```
'ComplexNumbers.Complex' defines operator == or operator != but does not
override
Object.Equals(object o)
'ComplexNumbers.Complex' defines operator == or operator != but does not
override
Object.GetHashCode()
```

If you define the `!=` and `==` operators, you should also override the *Equals* and *GetHashCode* methods inherited from *System.Object*.

#### NOTE

If the Error List window is not visible, on the View menu, click Error List.

4. Override the *Equals* method in the *Complex* class, as shown here in bold:

```
class Complex
{
    ...
    public override bool Equals(Object obj)
    {
        if (obj is Complex)
        {
            Complex compare = (Complex)obj;
            return (this.Real == compare.Real) &&
                (this.Imaginary == compare.Imaginary);
        }
        else
        {
            return false;
        }
    }
}
```

The *Equals* method takes an *Object* as a parameter. This code verifies that the type of the parameter is actually a *Complex* object. If it is, this code compares the values in the *Real* and *Imaginary* properties in the current instance and the parameter passed in. If they are the same, the method returns *true*; otherwise, it returns *false*. If the parameter passed in is not a *Complex* object, the method returns *false*.

#### IMPORTANT

It is tempting to write the *Equals* method like this:

```
public override bool Equals(Object obj)
{
    Complex compare = obj as Complex;
```

```

        Complex compare = obj as Complex;
        if (compare != null)
        {
            return (this.Real == compare.Real) &&
                (this.Imaginary == compare.Imaginary);
        }
        else
        {
            return false;
        }
    }
}

```

However, the expression `compare != null` invokes the `!=` operator of the *Complex* class, which calls the *Equals* method again, resulting in a recursive loop.

5. Override the *GetHashCode* method. This implementation simply calls the method inherited from the *Object* class, but you can provide your own mechanism to generate a hash code for an object if you prefer.

```

Class Complex
{
    ...
    public override int GetHashCode()
    {
        return base.GetHashCode();
    }
}

```

6. On the Build menu, click Rebuild Solution.  
Verify that the solution now builds without reporting any warnings.
7. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the following code shown in bold to the end of the *doWork* method.

```

static void doWork()
{
    ...
    if (temp == first)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Comparison: temp == first");
    }
    else
    {

```

```

        Console.WriteLine("Comparison: temp != first");
    }
    if (temp == temp)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Comparison: temp == temp");
    }
    else
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Comparison: temp != temp");
    }
}

```

#### NOTE

The expression *temp == temp* generates the warning message “Comparison made to same variable: did you mean to compare to something else?” In this case, you can ignore the warning because this comparison is intentional; it is to verify that the `==` operator is working as expected.

8. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the final two messages displayed are these:

```

Comparison: temp != first
Comparison: temp == temp

```

9. Close the application, and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Understanding conversion operators

Sometimes, you need to convert an expression of one type to another. For example, the following method is declared with a single *double* parameter:

```

class Example
{
    public static void MyDoubleMethod(double parameter)
    {
        ...
    }
}

```

You might reasonably expect that only values of type *double* could be used as arguments when calling *MyDoubleMethod*, but this is not so. The C# compiler also allows *MyDoubleMethod* to be called with an argument of some other type, but only if the value of the argument can be converted to a *double*. For example, if you provide an *int* argument, the compiler generates code that converts the value of the argument to a *double* when the method is called.

## Providing built-in conversions

The built-in types have some built-in conversions. For example, as mentioned previously, an *int* can be implicitly converted to a *double*. An implicit conversion requires no special syntax and never throws an exception.

```
Example.MyDoubleMethod(42); // implicit int-to-double conversion
```

An implicit conversion is sometimes called a *widening conversion* because the result is *wider* than the original value—it contains at least as much information as the original value, and nothing is lost. In the case of *int* and *double*, the range of *double* is greater than that of *int*, and all *int* values have an equivalent *double* value. However, the converse is not true, and a *double* value cannot be implicitly converted to an *int*:

```
class Example
{
    public static void MyIntMethod(int parameter)
    {
        ...
    }
}
...
Example.MyIntMethod(42.0); // compile-time error
```

When you convert a *double* to an *int*, you run the risk of losing information, so the conversion will not be performed automatically. (Consider what would happen if the argument to *MyIntMethod* were 42.5: How should this be converted?) A *double* can be converted to an *int*, but the conversion requires an explicit notation (a cast):

```
Example.MyIntMethod((int)42.0);
```

An explicit conversion is sometimes called a *narrowing conversion* because the result is *narrower* than the original value (that is, it can contain less information) and can throw an *OverflowException* exception if the resulting value is out of the range of the target type. In C#, you can create conversion operators for your own user-defined types to control whether it is sensible to convert values to other types, and you can also specify whether these conversions are implicit or explicit.

## Implementing user-defined conversion operators

The syntax for declaring a user-defined conversion operator has some similarities to that for declaring an overloaded operator, but also some important differences. Here's a conversion operator that allows an *Hour* object to be implicitly converted to an *int*:

```
struct Hour
{
    ...
    public static implicit operator int (Hour from)
    {
        return from.value;
    }
    private int value;
}
```

A conversion operator must be *public* and it must also be *static*. The type from which you are converting is declared as the parameter (in this case, *Hour*), and the type to which you are converting is declared as the type name after the keyword *operator* (in this case, *int*). There is no return type specified before the keyword *operator*.

When declaring your own conversion operators, you must specify whether they are implicit conversion operators or explicit conversion operators. You do this by using the *implicit* and *explicit* keywords. For example, the *Hour* to *int* conversion operator mentioned earlier is implicit, meaning that the C# compiler can use it without requiring a cast.

```
class Example
{
    public static void MyOtherMethod(int parameter) { ... }
```

```

public static void Main()
{
    Hour lunch = new Hour(12);
    Example.MyOtherMethod(lunch); // implicit Hour to int conversion
}
}

```

If the conversion operator had been declared *explicit*, the preceding example would not have compiled, because an explicit conversion operator requires a cast.

```

Example.MyOtherMethod((int)lunch); // explicit Hour to int conversion

```

When should you declare a conversion operator as explicit or implicit? If a conversion is always safe, does not run the risk of losing information, and cannot throw an exception, it can be defined as an *implicit* conversion. Otherwise, it should be declared as an *explicit* conversion. Converting from an *Hour* to an *int* is always safe—every *Hour* has a corresponding *int* value—so it makes sense for it to be implicit. An operator that converts a *string* to an *Hour* should be explicit because not all strings represent valid *Hours*. (The string “7” is fine, but how would you convert the string “Hello, World” to an *Hour*?)

## Creating symmetric operators, revisited

Conversion operators provide you with an alternative way to resolve the problem of providing symmetric operators. For example, instead of providing three versions of *operator+* (*Hour* + *Hour*, *Hour* + *int*, and *int* + *Hour*) for the *Hour* structure, as shown earlier, you can provide a single version of *operator+* (that takes two *Hour* parameters) and an implicit *int* to *Hour* conversion, like this:

```

struct Hour
{
    public Hour(int initialValue)
    {
        this.value = initialValue;
    }
    public static Hour operator +(Hour lhs, Hour rhs)
    {
        return new Hour(lhs.value + rhs.value);
    }
    public static implicit operator Hour (int from)

```

```

    public static implicit operator Hour (int from)
    {
        return new Hour (from);
    }
    ...
    private int value;
}

```

If you add an *Hour* to an *int* (in either order), the C# compiler automatically converts the *int* to an *Hour* and then calls *operator+* with two *Hour* arguments, as demonstrated here:

```

void Example(Hour a, int b)
{
    Hour eg1 = a + b; // b converted to an Hour
    Hour eg2 = b + a; // b converted to an Hour
}

```

## Writing conversion operators

In the final exercise of this chapter, you will add further operators to the *Complex* class. You will start by writing a pair of conversion operators that convert between the *int* type and the *Complex* type. Converting an *int* to a *Complex* object is always a safe process and never loses information (because an *int* is really just a *Complex* number without an imaginary element). So, you will implement this as an implicit conversion operator. However, the converse is not true—to convert a *Complex* object into an *int*, you have to discard the imaginary element. Thus, you will implement this conversion operator as explicit.

Implement the conversion operators

1. Return to Visual Studio 2013 and display the *Complex.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the constructor shown in bold in the code that follows to the *Complex* class, immediately after the existing constructor and before the *ToString* method. This new constructor takes a single *int* parameter, which it uses to initialize the *Real* property. The *Imaginary* property is set to 0.

```

class Complex
{
    ...
    public Complex(int real)

```



```

    {
        this.Real = real;
        this.Imaginary = 0;
    }
    ...
}

```

2. Add the following implicit conversion operator to the *Complex* class.

```

class Complex
{
    ...
    public static implicit operator Complex(int from)
    {
        return new Complex(from);
    }
    ...
}

```

This operator converts from an *int* to a *Complex* object by returning a new instance of the *Complex* class built using the constructor you created in the previous step.

3. Add the following explicit conversion operator shown in bold to the *Complex* class.

```

class Complex
{
    ...
    public static explicit operator int(Complex from)
    {
        return from.Real;
    }
    ...
}

```

This operator takes a *Complex* object and returns the value of the *Real* property. This conversion discards the imaginary element of the complex number.

4. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the following code shown in bold to the end of the *doWork* method.

```

static void doWork()
{
    ...
    Console.WriteLine("Current value of temp is {0}", temp);
    if (temp == 2)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Comparison after conversion: temp == 2");
    }
    else
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Comparison after conversion: temp != 2");
    }
    temp += 2;
    Console.WriteLine("Value after adding 2: temp = {0}", temp);
}

```

These statements test the implicit operator that converts an *int* to a *Complex* object. The *if* statement compares a *Complex* object to an *int*. The compiler generates code that converts the *int* into a *Complex* object first and then invokes the `==` operator of the *Complex* class. The statement that adds 2 to the *temp* variable converts the *int* value 2 into a *Complex* object and then uses the `+` operator of the *Complex* class.

5. Add the following statements to the end of the *doWork* method:

```

static void doWork()
{
    ...
    int tempInt = temp;
    Console.WriteLine("Int value after conversion: tempInt == {0}", tempInt);
}

```

The first statement attempts to assign a *Complex* object to an *int* variable.

6. On the Build menu, click Rebuild Solution.

The solution fails to build, and the compiler reports the following error in the Error List window:

```

Cannot implicitly convert type 'ComplexNumbers.Complex' to 'int'. An explicit
conversion exists (are you missing a cast?)

```

The operator that converts from a *Complex* object to an *int* is an explicit conversion operator, so you must specify a cast.

7. Modify the statement that attempts to store a *Complex* value in an *int* variable to use a cast, like this:

```
int tempInt = (int)temp;
```

8. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the solution now builds and that the final four messages displayed look like this:

```
Current value of temp is (2 + 0i)
Comparison after conversion: temp == 2
Value after adding 2: temp = (4 + 0i)
Int value after conversion: tempInt == 4
```

9. Close the application, and return to Visual Studio 2013.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to overload operators and provide functionality specific to a class or structure. You implemented a number of common arithmetic operators, and you also created operators with which you can compare instances of a class. Finally, you learned how to create implicit and explicit conversion operators.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 23](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

| To        | Do this   |
|-----------|---|
| Implement | Write the keywords <i>public</i> and <i>static</i> , followed by the return type, followed by the |

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| an operator                  | <p><i>operator</i> keyword, followed by the operator symbol being declared, followed by the appropriate parameters between parentheses. Implement the logic for the operator in the body of the method. For example:</p> <pre> class Complex {     ...     public static bool operator==(Complex lhs,                                 Complex rhs)     {         ... // Implement logic for == operator     }     ... } </pre>  |
| Define a conversion operator | <p>Write the keywords <i>public</i> and <i>static</i>, followed by the keyword <i>implicit</i> or <i>explicit</i>, followed by the <i>operator</i> keyword, followed by the type being converted to, followed by the type being converted from as a single parameter between parentheses. For example:</p> <pre> class Complex {     ...     public static implicit operator Complex(         int from)     {         ... // code to convert from an int     }     ... } </pre> |

# **Part IV. Building professional Windows 8.1 applications with C#**

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Chapter 23

Chapter 24

Chapter 25

Chapter 26

Chapter 27

# Chapter 23. Improving throughput by using tasks

---

After completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- Why perform multitasking by using parallel processing?
- Using the *Task* class to implement parallelism
- Use the *Parallel* class to parallelize some common programming constructs.
- Canceling tasks and handling exceptions

In the bulk of the preceding chapters in this book, you learned how to use C# to write programs that run in a single-threaded manner. By *single-threaded*, I mean that at any one point in time, a program has been executing a single instruction. This might not always be the most efficient approach for an application to take. Applications that can perform multiple operations at the same time might be able to make better use of the resources available on a computer. Some processes might run more quickly if you can divide them into parallel paths of execution that can run concurrently. This chapter is concerned with improving throughput in your applications by maximizing the use of the available processing power. Specifically, in this chapter, you will learn how to use the *Task* objects to apply effective multitasking to computationally intensive applications.

## Why perform multitasking by using parallel processing?

There are two primary reasons why you might want to perform multitasking in an application:

- **To improve responsiveness.** You can give the user of an application the

impression that the program is performing more than one task at a time by dividing the program up into concurrent threads of execution and allowing each thread to run in turn for a short period of time. This is the conventional cooperative model with which many experienced Windows developers are familiar. However, this is not true multitasking because the processor is shared between threads, and the cooperative nature of this approach requires that the code executed by each thread behaves in an appropriate manner. If one thread dominates the CPU and resources available at the expense of other threads, the advantages of this approach are lost. It is sometimes difficult to write well-behaved applications that follow this model consistently. However, a major aim of Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 is to provide a platform that addresses these issues, and the Windows Runtime (WinRT) that implements the execution environment for Windows 8.1 supplies many APIs that are geared toward this mode of operation. [Chapter 24](#) discusses these features in more detail.

- **To improve scalability.** You can improve scalability by making efficient use of the processing resources available and using these resources to reduce the time required to execute parts of an application. A developer can determine which parts of an application can be performed in parallel and arrange for them to be run concurrently. As more computing resources are added, more operations can be run in parallel. Until relatively recently, this model was suitable only for systems that either had multiple CPUs or were able to spread the processing across different computers networked together. In both cases, you had to use a model that arranged for coordination between parallel tasks. Microsoft provides a specialized version of Windows called High Performance Computing (HPC) Server 2008, with which an organization can build clusters of servers that can distribute and execute tasks in parallel. Developers can use the Microsoft implementation of the Message Passing Interface (MPI)—a well-known language-independent communications protocol—to build applications based on parallel tasks that coordinate and cooperate with each other by sending messages. Solutions based on Windows HPC Server 2008 and MPI are ideal for large-scale, compute-bound engineering and scientific applications, but they are unsuitable for smaller-scale systems running on desktop or tablet computers.

From these descriptions, you might be tempted to conclude that the most cost

From these descriptions, you might be tempted to conclude that the most cost-effective way to build multitasking solutions for desktop computers and mobile devices is to use the cooperative multithreaded approach. However, this mechanism was simply intended to improve responsiveness—to ensure that single-processor computers give each task a fair share of that processor. It is not well-suited for multiprocessor machines because it is not designed to distribute the load across processors and, consequently, does not scale well. When desktop machines with multiple processors were expensive (and as a result relatively rare), this was not an issue. However, this situation is changing, as I will briefly explain.

## **The rise of the multicore processor**

Just over 12 years ago, the cost of a decent personal computer was in the range of \$800 to \$1,500. Today, a decent personal computer still costs about the same, even after 12 years of price inflation. The specification of a typical computer these days is likely to include a processor running at a speed of between 2 GHz and 3 GHz, 500–1000 GB of hard disk storage, 4–8 GB of RAM, high-speed and high-resolution graphics, and a rewritable DVD drive. Just over a decade ago, the processor speed for a typical machine was between 500 MHz and 1 GHz, 80 GB was a large hard disk, Windows ran quite happily with 256 MB or less of RAM, and rewritable CD drives cost well over \$100. (Rewritable DVD drives were rare and extremely expensive.) This is the joy of technological progress: ever faster and more powerful hardware at cheaper and cheaper prices.

This is not a new trend. In 1965, Gordon E. Moore, cofounder of Intel, wrote a paper titled “Cramming More Components onto Integrated Circuits,” which discussed how the increasing miniaturization of components enabled more transistors to be embedded on a silicon chip, and how the falling costs of production as the technology became more accessible would lead economics to dictate squeezing as many as 65,000 components onto a single chip by 1975. Moore’s observations lead to the dictum frequently referred to as Moore’s Law, which basically states that the number of transistors that can be placed inexpensively on an integrated circuit will increase exponentially, doubling approximately every two years. (Actually, Gordon Moore was more optimistic than this initially, postulating that the volume of transistors was likely to double every year, but he later modified his calculations.) The ability to pack transistors together led to the ability to pass data between them more quickly. This meant



together led to the ability to pass data between them more quickly. This means we could expect to see chip manufacturers produce faster and more powerful microprocessors at an almost unrelenting pace, enabling software developers to write ever more complicated software that would run more quickly.

Moore's Law concerning the miniaturization of electronic components still holds, even after nearly 50 years. However, physics has started to intervene. There comes a limit when it is not possible to transmit signals between transistors on a single chip any faster, no matter how small or densely packed they are. To a software developer, the most noticeable result of this limitation is that processors have stopped getting faster. Seven or eight years ago, a fast processor ran at 3 GHz. Today, a fast processor still runs at 3 GHz.

The limit to the speed at which processors can transmit data between components has caused chip companies to look at alternative mechanisms for increasing the amount of work a processor can do. The result is that most modern processors now have two or more *processor cores*. Effectively, chip manufacturers have put multiple processors on the same chip and added the necessary logic to enable them to communicate and coordinate with one another. Quad-core (four cores) and eight-core processors are now common. Chips with 16, 32, and 64 cores are available, and the price of dual-core and quad-core processors is now sufficiently low that they are an expected element in laptop and tablet computers. So, although processors have stopped speeding up, you can now expect to get more of them on a single chip.

What does this mean to a developer writing C# applications?

In the days before multicore processors, you could speed up a single-threaded application simply by running it on a faster processor. With multicore processors, this is no longer the case. A single-threaded application will run at the same speed on a single-core, dual-core, or quad-core processor that all have the same clock frequency. The difference is that on a dual-core processor, as far as your application is concerned, one of the processor cores will be sitting around idle, and on a quad-core processor, three of the cores will be simply ticking away, waiting for work. To make the best use of multicore processors, you need to write your applications to take advantage of multitasking.

## Implementing multitasking by using the

## Microsoft .NET Framework

Multitasking is the ability to do more than one thing at the same time. It is one of those concepts that is easy to describe but that, until recently, has been difficult to implement.

In the optimal scenario, an application running on a multicore processor performs as many concurrent tasks as there are processor cores available, keeping each of the cores busy. However, there are many issues that you need to consider to implement concurrency, including the following:

- How can you divide an application into a set of concurrent operations?
- How can you arrange for a set of operations to execute concurrently, on multiple processors?
- How can you ensure that you attempt to perform only as many concurrent operations as there are processors available?
- If an operation is blocked (such as while it is waiting for input/output (I/O) to complete), how can you detect this and arrange for the processor to run a different operation rather than sit idle?
- How can you determine when one or more concurrent operations have completed?

To an application developer, the first question is a matter of application design. The remaining questions depend on the programmatic infrastructure. Microsoft provides the *Task* class and a collection of associated types in the *System.Threading.Tasks* namespace to help address these issues.

### Tasks, threads, and the *ThreadPool*

The *Task* class is an abstraction of a concurrent operation. You create a *Task* object to run a block of code. You can instantiate multiple *Task* objects and start them running in parallel if sufficient processors or processor cores are available.

NOTE

From now on, I will use the term *processor* to refer to either a single-core processor or a single processor core on a multicore processor.

Internally, the Common Language Runtime (CLR) implements tasks and schedules them for execution by using *Thread* objects and the *ThreadPool* class. Multithreading and thread pools have been available with the .NET Framework since version 1.0, and if you are building traditional desktop applications, you can use the *Thread* class in the *System.Threading* namespace directly in your code. However, the *Thread* class is not available for Windows Store apps; instead, you use the *Task* class.

The *Task* class provides a powerful abstraction for threading with which you can easily distinguish between the degree of parallelization in an application (the tasks) and the units of parallelization (the threads). On a single-processor computer, these items are usually the same. However, on a computer with multiple processors or with a multicore processor, they are different. If you design a program based directly on threads, you will find that your application might not scale very well; the program will use the number of threads you explicitly create, and the operating system will schedule only that number of threads. This can lead to overloading and poor response time if the number of threads greatly exceeds the number of available processors, or to inefficiency and poor throughput if the number of threads is less than the number of processors.

The CLR optimizes the number of threads required to implement a set of concurrent tasks and schedules them efficiently according to the number of available processors. It implements a queuing mechanism to distribute the workload across a set of threads allocated to a thread pool (implemented by using a *ThreadPool* object). When a program creates a *Task* object, the task is added to a global queue. When a thread becomes available, the task is removed from the global queue and is executed by that thread. The *ThreadPool* class implements a number of optimizations and uses a work-stealing algorithm to ensure that threads are scheduled efficiently.

#### NOTE

The *ThreadPool* class was available in previous editions of the .NET Framework, but it was

enhanced significantly in the .NET Framework 4.0 to support *Tasks*.

You should note that the number of threads created by the CLR to handle your tasks is not necessarily the same as the number of processors. Depending on the nature of the workload, one or more processors might be busy performing high-priority work for other applications and services. Consequently, the optimal number of threads for your application might be less than the number of processors in the machine. Alternatively, one or more threads in an application might be waiting for long-running memory access, I/O, or a network operation to complete, leaving the corresponding processors free. In this case, the optimal number of threads might be more than the number of available processors. The CLR follows an iterative strategy, known as a *hill-climbing* algorithm, to dynamically determine the ideal number of threads for the current workload.

The important point is that all you have to do in your code is divide, or partition, your application into tasks that can be run in parallel. The CLR takes responsibility for creating the appropriate number of threads based on the processor architecture and workload of your computer, associating your tasks with these threads and arranging for them to be run efficiently. It does not matter if you partition your work into too many tasks because the CLR will attempt to run only as many concurrent threads as is practical; in fact, you are encouraged to *overpartition* your work because this will help to ensure that your application scales if you move it onto a computer that has more processors available.

## Creating, running, and controlling tasks

You can create *Task* objects by using the *Task* constructor. The *Task* constructor is overloaded, but all versions expect you to provide an *Action* delegate as a parameter. [Chapter 20](#) illustrates that an *Action* delegate references a method that does not return a value. A *Task* object invokes this delegate when it is scheduled to run. The following example creates a *Task* object that uses a delegate to run the method called *doWork*:

```
Task task = new Task(doWork);  
...  
private void doWork()  
{  
    ...  
}
```

```
// The task runs this code when it is started
...
}
```

#### TIP

The default *Action* type references a method that takes no parameters. Other overloads of the *Task* constructor take an *Action<object>* parameter representing a delegate that refers to a method that takes a single *object* parameter. With these overloads, you can pass data into the method run by the task. The following code shows an example:

```
Action<object> action;
action = doWorkWithObject;
object parameterData = ...;
Task task = new Task(action, parameterData);
...
private void doWorkWithObject(object o)
{
    ...
}
```

After you create a *Task* object, you can set it running by using the *Start* method, like this:

```
Task task = new Task(...);
task.Start();
```

The *Start* method is also overloaded, and you can optionally specify a *TaskScheduler* object to control the degree of concurrency and other scheduling options. You can obtain a reference to the default *TaskScheduler* object by using the static *Default* property of the *TaskScheduler* class. The *TaskScheduler* class also provides the static *Current* property, which returns a reference to the *TaskScheduler* object currently used. (This *TaskScheduler* object is used if you do not explicitly specify a scheduler.) A task can provide hints to the default *TaskScheduler* about how to schedule and run the task if you specify a value from the *TaskCreationOptions* enumeration in the *Task* constructor.

#### MORE INFO

For more information about the *TaskScheduler* class and the *TaskCreationOptions*

enumeration, consult the documentation describing the .NET Framework class library provided with Visual Studio.

Creating and running a task is a very common process, and the *Task* class provides the static *Run* method with which you can combine these operations. The *Run* method takes an *Action* delegate specifying the operation to perform (like the *Task* constructor), but starts the task running immediately. It returns a reference to the *Task* object. You can use it like this:

```
Task task = Task.Run(() => doWork());
```

When the method run by the task completes, the task finishes, and the thread used to run the task can be recycled to execute another task.

When a task completes, you can arrange for another task to be scheduled immediately by creating a *continuation*. To do this, call the *ContinueWith* method of a *Task* object. When the action performed by the *Task* object completes, the scheduler automatically creates a new *Task* object to run the action specified by the *ContinueWith* method. The method specified by the continuation expects a *Task* parameter, and the scheduler passes in to the method a reference to the task that completed. The value returned by *ContinueWith* is a reference to the new *Task* object. The following code example creates a *Task* object that runs the *doWork* method and specifies a continuation that runs the *doMoreWork* method in a new task when the first task completes:

```
Task task = new Task(doWork);
task.Start();
Task newTask = task.ContinueWith(doMoreWork);
...
private void doWork()
{
    // The task runs this code when it is started
    ...
}
...
private void doMoreWork(Task task)
{
    // The continuation runs this code when doWork completes
    ...
}
```

The *ContinueWith* method is heavily overloaded, and you can provide a number of parameters that specify additional items, such as the *TaskScheduler* to use and a *TaskContinuationOptions* value. The *TaskContinuationOptions* type is an enumeration that contains a superset of the values in the *TaskCreationOptions* enumeration. The additional values available include the following:

- ***NotOnCanceled.* and *OnlyOnCanceled*** The *NotOnCanceled* option specifies that the continuation should run only if the previous action completes and is not canceled, and the *OnlyOnCanceled* option specifies that the continuation should run only if the previous action is canceled. The section **Canceling tasks and handling exceptions** later in this chapter describes how to cancel a task.
- ***NotOnFaulted.* and *OnlyOnFaulted*** The *NotOnFaulted* option indicates that the continuation should run only if the previous action completes and does not throw an unhandled exception. The *OnlyOnFaulted* option causes the continuation to run only if the previous action throws an unhandled exception. The section **Canceling tasks and handling exceptions** provides more information on how to manage exceptions in a task.
- ***NotOnRanToCompletion.* and *OnlyOnRanToCompletion*** The *NotOnRanToCompletion* option specifies that the continuation should run only if the previous action does not complete successfully; it must either be canceled or throw an exception. *OnlyOnRanToCompletion* causes the continuation to run only if the previous action completes successfully.

The following code example shows how to add a continuation to a task that runs only if the initial action does not throw an unhandled exception:

```
Task task = new Task(doWork);  
task.ContinueWith(doMoreWork, TaskContinuationOptions.NotOnFaulted);  
task.Start();
```

A common requirement of applications that invoke operations in parallel is to synchronize tasks. The *Task* class provides the *Wait* method, which implements a simple task coordination mechanism. Using this method, you can suspend execution of the current thread until the specified task completes, like this:

```
task2.Wait(); // Wait at this point until task2 completes
```

You can wait for a set of tasks by using the static *WaitAll* and *WaitAny* methods of the *Task* class. Both methods take a *params* array containing a set of *Task* objects. The *WaitAll* method waits until all specified tasks have completed, and *WaitAny* stops until at least one of the specified tasks has finished. You use them like this:

```
Task.WaitAll(task, task2); // Wait for both task and task2 to complete  
Task.WaitAny(task, task2); // Wait for either task or task2 to complete
```

## Using the *Task* class to implement parallelism

In the next exercise, you will use the *Task* class to parallelize processor-intensive code in an application, and you will see how this parallelization reduces the time taken for the application to run by spreading the computations across multiple processor cores.

The application, called GraphDemo, consists of a page that uses an *Image* control to display a graph. The application plots the points for the graph by performing a complex calculation.

### NOTE

The exercises in this chapter are intended to run on a computer with a multicore processor. If you have only a single-core CPU, you will not observe the same effects. Also, you should not start any additional programs or services between exercises because these might affect the results that you see.

Examine and run the GraphDemo single-threaded application

1. Start Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the GraphDemo solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 23\GraphDemo folder in your Documents folder. This is a Windows Store app.
3. In Solution Explorer, in the GraphDemo project, double-click the file GraphWindow.xaml to display the form in the Design View window.



Apart from the *Grid* control defining the layout, the form contains the following important controls:

- An *Image* control called *graphImage*. This image control displays the graph rendered by the application.
- A *Button* control called *plotButton*. The user clicks this button to generate the data for the graph and display it in the *graphImage* control.

#### NOTE

In the interest of keeping the operation of the application in this exercise simple, this application displays the button on the page. In a production Windows Store app, buttons such as this should be located on the app toolbar.

- A *TextBlock* control called *duration*. The application displays the time taken to generate and render the data for the graph in this label.
- In Solution Explorer, expand the *GraphWindow.xaml* file and then double-click *GraphWindow.xaml.cs* to display the code for the form in the Code and Text Editor window.

The form uses a *WriteableBitmap* object (defined in the *Windows.UI.Xaml.Media.Imaging* namespace) called *graphBitmap* to render the graph. The variables *pixelWidth* and *pixelHeight* specify the horizontal and vertical resolution, respectively, for the *WriteableBitmap* object:

```
public partial class GraphWindow : Window
{
    // Reduce pixelWidth and pixelHeight if there is insufficient space available
    private int pixelWidth = 12000;
    private int pixelHeight = 7500;
    private WriteableBitmap graphBitmap = null;
    ...
}
```

#### NOTE

This application has been developed and tested on a desktop computer with 4 GB of memory. If your computer has less memory than this available, you might need to reduce the values in

the *pixelWidth* and *pixelHeight* variables; otherwise, the application might generate *OutOfMemoryException* exceptions. Similarly, if you have much more memory available, you might want to increase the values of these variables to see the full effects of this exercise.

- Examine the last three lines of the *GraphWindow* constructor, which look like this:

```
public GraphWindow()
{
    ...
    int dataSize = bytesPerPixel * pixelWidth * pixelHeight;
    data = new byte[dataSize];
    graphBitmap = new WriteableBitmap(pixelWidth, pixelHeight);
}
```

The first two lines instantiate a byte array that will hold the data for the graph. The size of this array depends on the resolution of the *WriteableBitmap* object, determined by the *pixelWidth* and *pixelHeight* fields. Additionally, this size has to be scaled by the amount of memory required to render each pixel; the *WriteableBitmap* class uses 4 bytes for each pixel, which specify the relative red, green, and blue intensity of each pixel and the alpha blending value of the pixel (the alpha blending value determines the transparency and brightness of the pixel).

The final statement creates the *WriteableBitmap* object with the specified resolution.

- Examine the code for the *plotButton\_Click* method:

```
private void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    Random rand = new Random();
    redValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    greenValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    blueValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    Stopwatch watch = Stopwatch.StartNew();
    generateGraphData(data);
    duration.Text = string.Format("Duration (ms): {0}", watch.ElapsedMilliseconds);
    Stream pixelStream = graphBitmap.PixelBuffer.AsStream();
    pixelStream.Seek(0, SeekOrigin.Begin);
    pixelStream.Write(data, 0, data.Length);
    graphBitmap.Invalidate();
}
```

```
graphImage.Source = graphBitmap;  
}
```

This method runs when the user clicks the *plotButton* button.

You will click this button several times later in the exercise, so that you can see that a new version of the graph has been drawn each time this method generates a random set of values for the red, green, and blue intensity of the points that are plotted (the graph will be a different color each time you click this button).

The *watch* variable is a *System.Diagnostics.Stopwatch* object. The *StopWatch* type is useful for timing operations. The static *StartNew* method of the *StopWatch* type creates a new instance of a *StopWatch* object and starts it running. You can query the running time of a *StopWatch* object by examining the *ElapsedMilliseconds* property.

The *generateGraphData* method populates the *data* array with the data for the graph to be displayed by the *WriteableBitmap* object. You will examine this method in the next step.

When the *generateGraphMethod* method has completed, the elapsed time (in milliseconds) appears in the duration *TextBox* control.

The final block of code takes the information held in the data array and copies it to the *WriteableBitmap* object for rendering. The simplest technique is to create an in-memory stream that can be used to populate the *PixelBuffer* property of the *WriteableBitmap* object. You can then use the *Write* method of this stream to copy the contents of the data array into this buffer. The *Invalidate* method of the *WriteableBitmap* class requests that the operating system redraws the bitmap by using the information held in the buffer. The *Source* property of an *Image* control specifies the data that the *Image* control should display. The final statement sets the *Source* property to the *WriteableBitmap* object.

- Examine the code for the *generateGraphData* method, shown here:

```
private void generateGraphData(byte[] data)  
{  
    int a = pixelWidth / 2;  
    int b = a * a;  
    int c = pixelHeight / 2;  
    for (int x = 0; x < a; x ++)  
    {
```

```

int s = x * x;
double p = Math.Sqrt(b - s);
for (double i = -p; i < p; i += 3)
{
    double r = Math.Sqrt(s + i * i) / a;
    double q = (r - 1) * Math.Sin(24 * r);
    double y = i / 3 + (q * c);
    plotXY(data, (int)(-x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight / 2)));
    plotXY(data, (int)(x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight / 2)));
}
}
}

```

This method performs a series of calculations to plot the points for a rather complex graph. (The actual calculation is unimportant—it just generates a graph that looks attractive.) As it calculates each point, it calls the *plotXY* method to set the appropriate bytes in the *data* array that correspond to these points. The points for the graph are reflected around the x-axis, so the *plotXY* method is called twice for each calculation: once for the positive value of the x-coordinate, and once for the negative value.

- Examine the *plotXY* method:

```

private void plotXY(byte[] data, int x, int y)
{
    int pixelIndex = (x + y * pixelWidth) * bytesPerPixel;
    data[pixelIndex] = blueValue;
    data[pixelIndex + 1] = greenValue;
    data[pixelIndex + 2] = redValue;
    data[pixelIndex + 3] = 0xBF;
}

```

This method sets the appropriate bytes in the *data* array that corresponds to x and y-coordinates passed in as parameters. Each point plotted corresponds to a pixel, and each pixel consists of 4 bytes, as described earlier. Any pixels left unset are displayed as black. The value 0xBF for the alpha blend byte indicates that the corresponding pixel should be displayed with a moderate intensity; if you decrease this value, the pixel will become fainter, while setting the value to 0xFF (the maximum value for a byte) will display the pixel at its brightest intensity.

- On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.

- When the Graph Demo window appears, click Plot Graph, and then wait.

Please be patient. The application takes several seconds to generate and display the graph, and the application is unresponsive while this occurs ([Chapter 24](#) explains why this is, and also instructs how to avoid this behavior). The following image shows the graph. Note the value in the Duration (ms) label in the following figure. In this case, the application took 4,938 milliseconds (ms) to plot the graph. Note that this duration does not include the time to actually render the graph, which might be another few seconds.

#### NOTE

The application was run on a computer with 4 GB of memory and a quad-core processor running at 2.40 GHz. Your times might vary if you are using a slower or faster processor with a different number of cores, or a computer with a greater or lesser amount of memory.

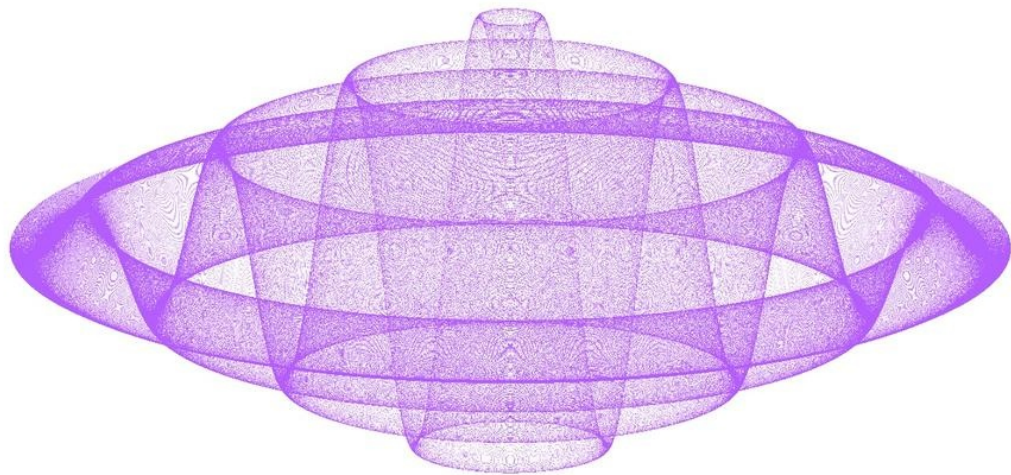
003 001

064 001

#### Graph Demo

Plot Graph

Duration (ms): 3038

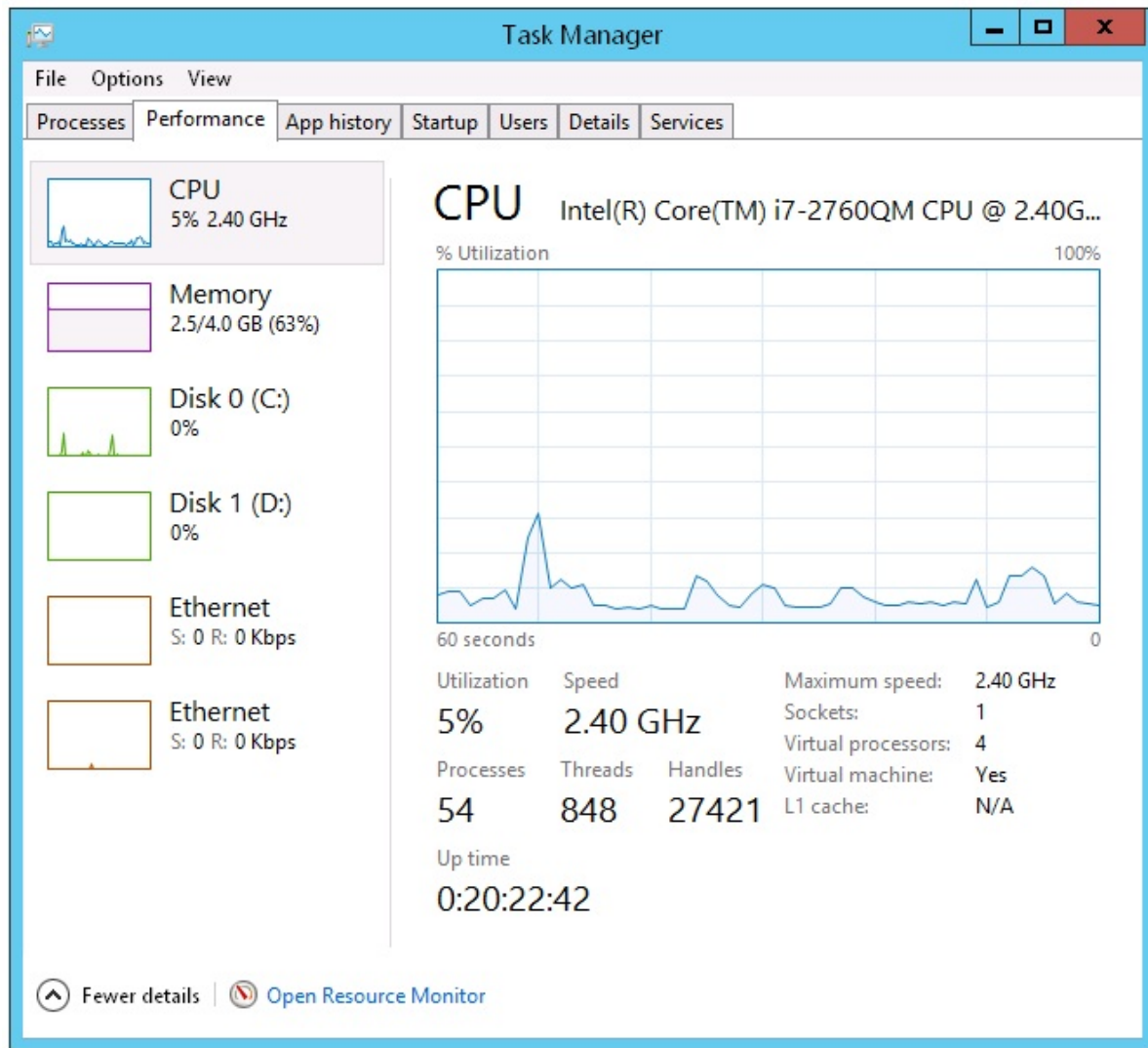


- Click Plot Graph again, and take note of the time taken. Repeat this action several times to obtain an average value.

#### NOTE

You might find that occasionally it takes an extended time for the graph to appear (more than 30 seconds). This tends to occur if you are running close to the memory capacity of your computer and Windows 8.1 has to page data between memory and disk. If you encounter this phenomenon, discard this time and do not include it when calculating your average.

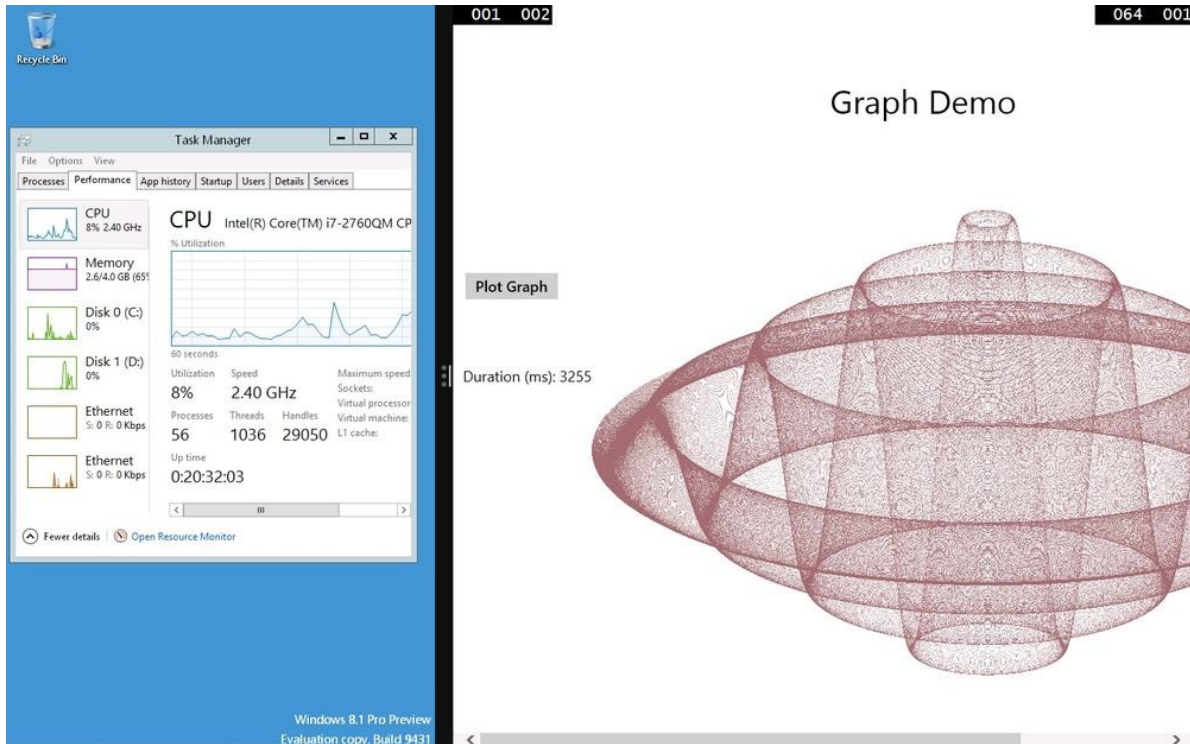
- Leave the application running and switch to the desktop. Right-click an empty area of the taskbar, and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, click Task Manager.
- In the Task Manager window, click the Performance tab and display the CPU utilization. If the Performance tab is not visible, click More Details (it should appear). Right-click the CPU Utilization graph, point to Change Graph To, and then click Overall Utilization. This action causes Task Manager to display the utilization of all the processor cores running on your computer in a single graph. The following image shows the Performance tab of Task Manager configured in this way:



- Return to the Graph Demo application and adjust the display to show the application in the main part of the screen with the desktop appearing in the left-hand side. Ensure that you can see the Task Manager window displaying the CPU utilization.

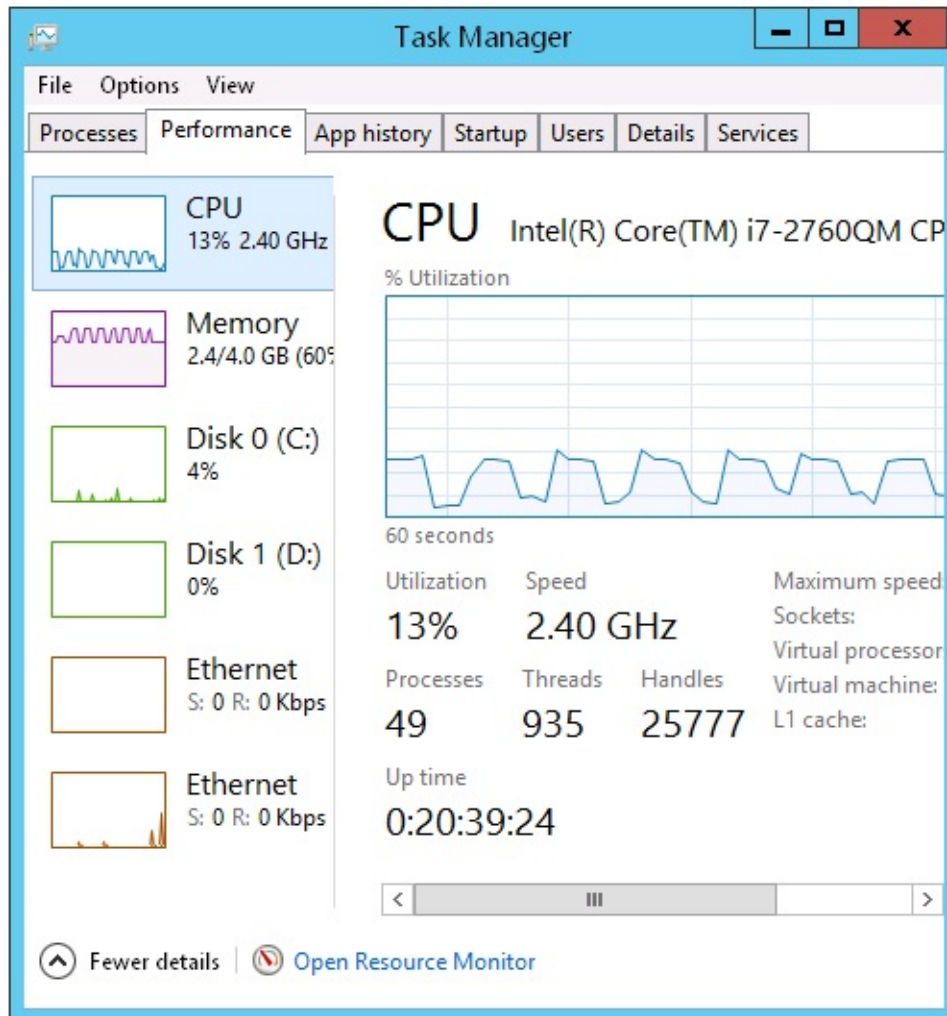
#### TIP

To display the GraphDemo application and the Windows Desktop side by side, with the GraphDemo application running full screen, click in the upper-left corner of the screen and drag the image of the Desktop to the left half of the screen. You can then move and resize windows to suit your display.



- Wait for the CPU utilization to level off, and then, in the Graph Demo window, click Plot Graph.
- Wait for the CPU utilization to level off again, and then click Plot Graph again.
- Repeat Step 16 several times, waiting for the CPU utilization to level off between clicks.
- Switch to the Task Manager window and examine the CPU utilization. Your results will vary, but on a dual-core processor, the CPU utilization will probably be somewhere around 50–55 percent while the graph was being generated. On a quad-core machine, the CPU utilization will likely be somewhere between 25 and 30 percent, as shown in the image that follows. Note that other factors, such as the type of graphics card in your computer, can also impact the performance.





- Return to Visual Studio 2013 and stop debugging.

You now have a baseline for the time the application takes to perform its calculations. However, it is clear from the CPU usage displayed by Task Manager that the application is not making full use of the processing resources available. On a dual-core machine, it is using just over half of the CPU power, and on a quad-core machine, it is employing a little over a quarter of the CPU. This phenomenon occurs because the application is single-threaded, and in a Windows application, a single thread can occupy only a single core on a multicore processor. To spread the load over all the available cores, you need to divide the application into tasks and arrange for each task to be executed by a separate thread running on a different core. This is what you will do in the following exercise.

Modify the GraphDemo application to use *Task* objects

1. Return to Visual Studio 2013, and display the `GraphWindow.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window, if it is not already open.
2. Examine the *generateGraphData* method.

The purpose of this method is to populate the items in the *data* array. It iterates through the array by using the outer *for* loop based on the *x* loop control variable, highlighted in bold in the following example:

```
private void generateGraphData(byte[] data)
{
    int a = pixelWidth / 2;
    int b = a * a;
    int c = pixelHeight / 2;
    for (int x = 0; x < a; x ++)
    {
        int s = x * x;
        double p = Math.Sqrt(b - s);
        for (double i = -p; i < p; i += 3)
        {
            double r = Math.Sqrt(s + i * i) / a;
            double q = (r - 1) * Math.Sin(24 * r);
            double y = i / 3 + (q * c);
            plotXY(data, (int)(-x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight / 2)));
            plotXY(data, (int)(x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight / 2)));
        }
    }
}
```

The calculation performed by one iteration of this loop is independent of the calculations performed by the other iterations. Therefore, it makes sense to partition the work performed by this loop and run different iterations on a separate processor.

3. Modify the definition of the *generateGraphData* method to take two additional *int* parameters called *partitionStart* and *partitionEnd*, as shown in bold in the following example:

```
private void generateGraphData(byte[] data, int partitionStart, int partitionEnd)
```

```
{
    ...
}
```

4. In the *generateGraphData* method, change the outer *for* loop to iterate between the values of *partitionStart* and *partitionEnd*, as shown here in bold:

```
private void generateGraphData(byte[] data, int partitionStart, int
partitionEnd)
{
    ...
    for (int x = partitionStart; x < partitionEnd; x++)
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

5. In the Code and Text Editor window, add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the GraphWindow.xaml.cs file:

```
using System.Threading.Tasks;
```

6. In the *plotButton\_Click* method, comment out the statement that calls the *generateGraphData* method and add the statement shown in bold in the following code that creates a *Task* object and starts it running:

```
...
Stopwatch watch = Stopwatch.StartNew();
// generateGraphData(data);
Task first = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, 0, pixelWidth / 4));
...
```

The task runs the code specified by the lambda expression. The values for the *partitionStart* and *partitionEnd* parameters indicate that the *Task* object calculates the data for the first half of the graph. (The data for the complete graph consists of points plotted for the values between 0 and *pixelWidth* / 2.)

7. Add another statement that creates and runs a second *Task* object on

another thread, as shown in the following bold-highlighted code:

```
...
Task first = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, 0, pixelWidth / 4));
Task second = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, pixelWidth / 4,
pixelWidth / 2));
...
```

This *Task* object invokes the *generateGraph* method and calculates the data for the values between *pixelWidth / 4* and *pixelWidth / 2*.

8. Add the following statement shown in bold that waits for both *Task* objects to complete their work before continuing:

```
Task second = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, pixelWidth / 4,
pixelWidth / 2));
Task.WaitAll(first, second);
...
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application. Adjust the display to show the application in the main part of the screen with the desktop appearing in the left side. As before, ensure that you can see the Task Manager window displaying the CPU utilization in the snapped view.
10. In the Graph Demo window, click Plot Graph. In the Task Manager window, wait for the CPU utilization to level off.
11. Repeat step 10 several more times, waiting for the CPU utilization to level off between clicks. Make a note of the duration recorded each time you click the button and calculate the average.

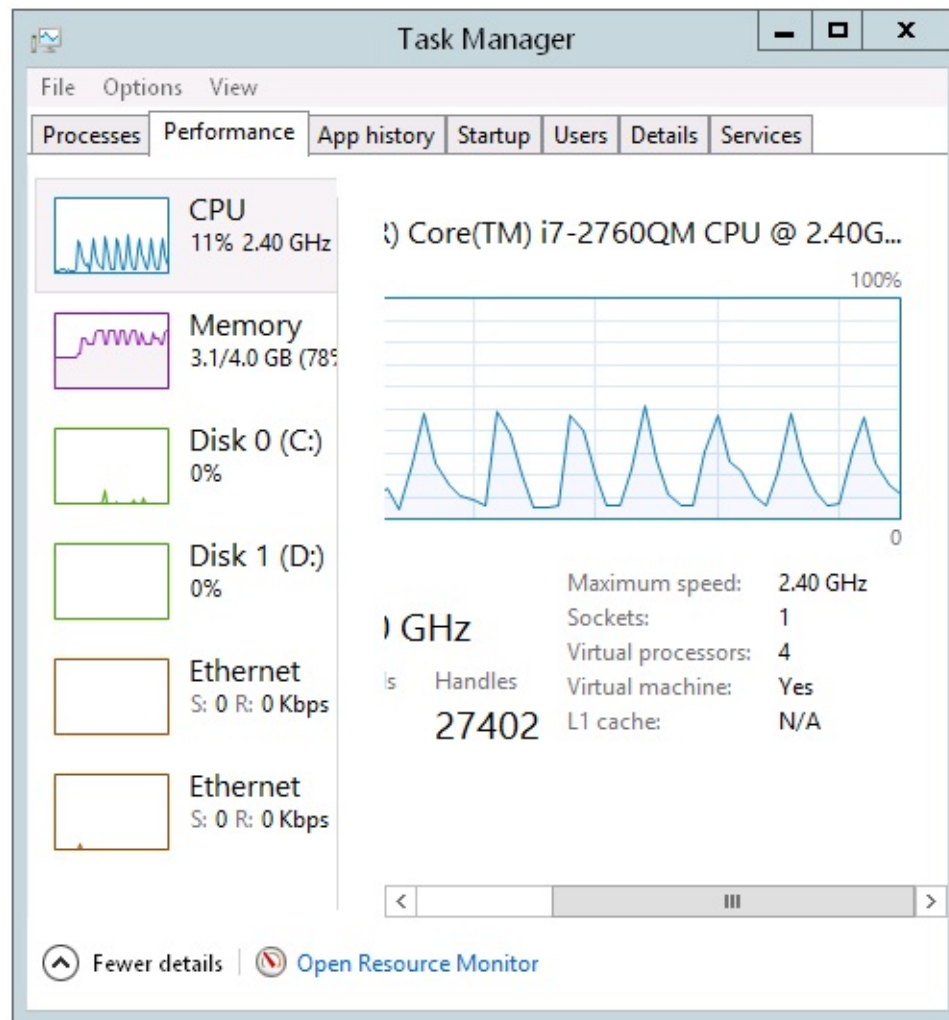
You should see that the application runs significantly quicker than it did previously. On my computer, the typical time dropped to 2,951 milliseconds—a reduction in time of about 40 percent.

In most cases, the time required to perform the calculations will be cut by nearly half, but the application still has some single-threaded elements, such as the logic that actually displays the graph after the data has been generated. This is why the overall time is still more than half the time taken

by the previous version of the application.

12. Switch to the Task Manager window.

You should see that the application uses more cores of the CPU. On my quad-core machine, the CPU usage peaked at approximately 50 percent each time I clicked Plot Graph. This is because the two tasks were each run on separate cores, but the remaining two cores were left unoccupied. If you have a dual-core machine, you will likely see processor utilization briefly reach 100 percent each time the graph is generated.



If you have a quad-core computer, you can increase the CPU utilization and reduce the time further by adding two more *Task* objects and dividing the work into four chunks in the *plotButton\_Click* method, as shown here in bold:

```

...
Task first = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, 0, pixelWidth / 8));
Task second = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, pixelWidth 8,
pixelWidth 4));
Task third = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, pixelWidth / 4,
pixelWidth 3 / 8));
Task fourth = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, pixelWidth 3 8,
pixelWidth 2));
Task.WaitAll(first, second, third, fourth);
...

```

If you have only a dual-core processor, you can still try this modification, and you should notice a small beneficial effect on the time. This is primarily because of the way in which the algorithms used by the CLR optimize the way in which the threads for each task are scheduled.

## Abstracting tasks by using the *Parallel* class

By using the *Task* class, you have complete control over the number of tasks your application creates. However, you had to modify the design of the application to accommodate the use of *Task* objects. You also had to add code to synchronize operations; the application can render the graph only when all the tasks have completed. In a complex application, synchronization of tasks can become a nontrivial process and it is easy to make mistakes.

With the *Parallel* class, you can parallelize some common programming constructs without requiring that you redesign an application. Internally, the *Parallel* class creates its own set of *Task* objects, and it synchronizes these tasks automatically when they have completed. The *Parallel* class is located in the *System.Threading.Tasks* namespace and provides a small set of static methods which you can use to indicate that code should be run in parallel if possible. These methods are as follows:

- ***Parallel.For***. You can use this method in place of a C# *for* statement. It defines a loop in which iterations can run in parallel by using tasks. This method is heavily overloaded (there are nine variations), but the general principle is the same for each: you specify a start value, an end value, and a reference to a method that takes an integer parameter. The method is executed for every value between the start value and one below the end value specified, and the parameter is populated with an integer that specifies the

current value. For example, consider the following simple *for* loop that performs each iteration in sequence:

```
for (int x = 0; x < 100; x++)
{
    // Perform loop processing
}
```

Depending on the processing performed by the body of the loop, you might be able to replace this loop with a *Parallel.For* construct that can perform iterations in parallel, like this:

```
Parallel.For(0, 100, performLoopProcessing);
...
private void performLoopProcessing(int x)
{
    // Perform loop processing
}
```

Using the overloads of the *Parallel.For* method, you can provide local data that is private to each thread, specify various options for creating the tasks run by the *For* method, and create a *ParallelLoopState* object that can be used to pass state information to other concurrent iterations of the loop. (Using a *ParallelLoopState* object is described later in this chapter.)

- ***Parallel.ForEach<T>***. You can use this method in place of a C# *foreach* statement. Like the *For* method, *ForEach* defines a loop in which iterations can run in parallel. You specify a collection that implements the *IEnumerable<T>* generic interface and a reference to a method that takes a single parameter of type *T*. The method is executed for each item in the collection, and the item is passed as the parameter to the method. Overloads are available with which you can provide private local thread data and specify options for creating the tasks run by the *ForEach* method.
- ***Parallel.Invoke***. You can use this method to execute a set of parameterless method calls as parallel tasks. You specify a list of delegated method calls (or lambda expressions) that take no parameters and do not return values. Each method call can be run on a separate thread, in any order. For example, the

following code makes a series of method calls:

```
doWork();  
doMoreWork();  
doYetMoreWork();
```

You can replace these statements with the following code, which invokes these methods by using a series of tasks:

```
Parallel.Invoke(  
    doWork,  
    doMoreWork,  
    doYetMoreWork  
);
```

You should bear in mind that the *Parallel* class determines the actual degree of parallelism appropriate for the environment and workload of the computer. For example, if you use *Parallel.For* to implement a loop that performs 1,000 iterations, the *Parallel* class does not necessarily create 1,000 concurrent tasks (unless you have an exceptionally powerful processor with 1,000 cores). Instead, the *Parallel* class creates what it considers to be the optimal number of tasks that balances the available resources against the requirement to keep the processors occupied. A single task might perform multiple iterations, and the tasks coordinate with each other to determine which iterations each task will perform. An important consequence of this is that you cannot guarantee the order in which the iterations are executed, so you must ensure that there are no dependencies between iterations; otherwise, you might encounter unexpected results, as you will see later in this chapter.

In the next exercise, you will return to the original version of the GraphData application and use the *Parallel* class to perform operations concurrently. Use the *Parallel* class to parallelize operations in the GraphData application

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, open the GraphDemo solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 23\Parallel GraphDemo folder in your Documents folder.

This is a copy of the original GraphDemo application. It does not use tasks yet.



2. In Solution Explorer, in the GraphDemo project, expand the GraphWindow.xaml node, and then double-click GraphWindow.xaml.cs to display the code for the form in the Code and Text Editor window.
3. Add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using System.Threading.Tasks;
```

4. Locate the *generateGraphData* method. It looks like this:

```
private void generateGraphData(byte[] data)
{
    int a = pixelWidth / 2;
    int b = a * a;
    int c = pixelHeight / 2;
    for (int x = 0; x < a; x++)
    {
        int s = x * x;
        double p = Math.Sqrt(b - s);
        for (double i = -p; i < p; i += 3)
        {
            double r = Math.Sqrt(s + i * i) / a;
            double q = (r - 1) * Math.Sin(24 * r);
            double y = i / 3 + (q * c);
            plotXY(data, (int)(-x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight
2))));
            plotXY(data, (int)(x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight
2))));
        }
    }
}
```

The outer *for* loop that iterates through values of the integer variable *x* is a prime candidate for parallelization. You might also consider the inner loop based on the variable *i*, but this loop takes more effort to parallelize because of the type of *i*. (The methods in the *Parallel* class expect the control variable to be an integer.) Additionally, if you have nested loops such as those that occur in this code, it is good practice to parallelize the outer loops first and then test to see whether the performance of the application is sufficient. If it is not, work your way through nested loops and parallelize them working from outer to inner loops, testing the

performance after modifying each one. You will find that in many cases parallelizing outer loops has the most impact on performance, whereas the effects of modifying inner loops becomes more marginal.

5. Cut the code in the body of the *for* loop, and create a new private *void* method called *calculateData* with this code. The *calculateData* method should take an *int* parameter called *x* and a byte array called *data*. Also, move the statements that declare the local variables *a*, *b*, and *c* from the *generateGraphData* method to the start of the *calculateData* method. The following code shows the *generateGraphData* method with this code removed and the *calculateData* method (do not try to compile this code yet):

```
private void generateGraphData(byte[] data)
{
    for (int x = 0; x < a; x++)
    {
    }
}
private void calculateData(int x, byte[] data)
{
    int a = pixelWidth / 2;
    int b = a * a;
    int c = pixelHeight / 2;
    int s = x * x;
    double p = Math.Sqrt(b - s);
    for (double i = -p; i < p; i += 3)
    {
        double r = Math.Sqrt(s + i * i) / a;
        double q = (r - 1) * Math.Sin(24 * r);
        double y = i / 3 + (q * c);
        plotXY(data, (int)(-x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight
2)));
        plotXY(data, (int)(x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight / 2)));
    }
}
```

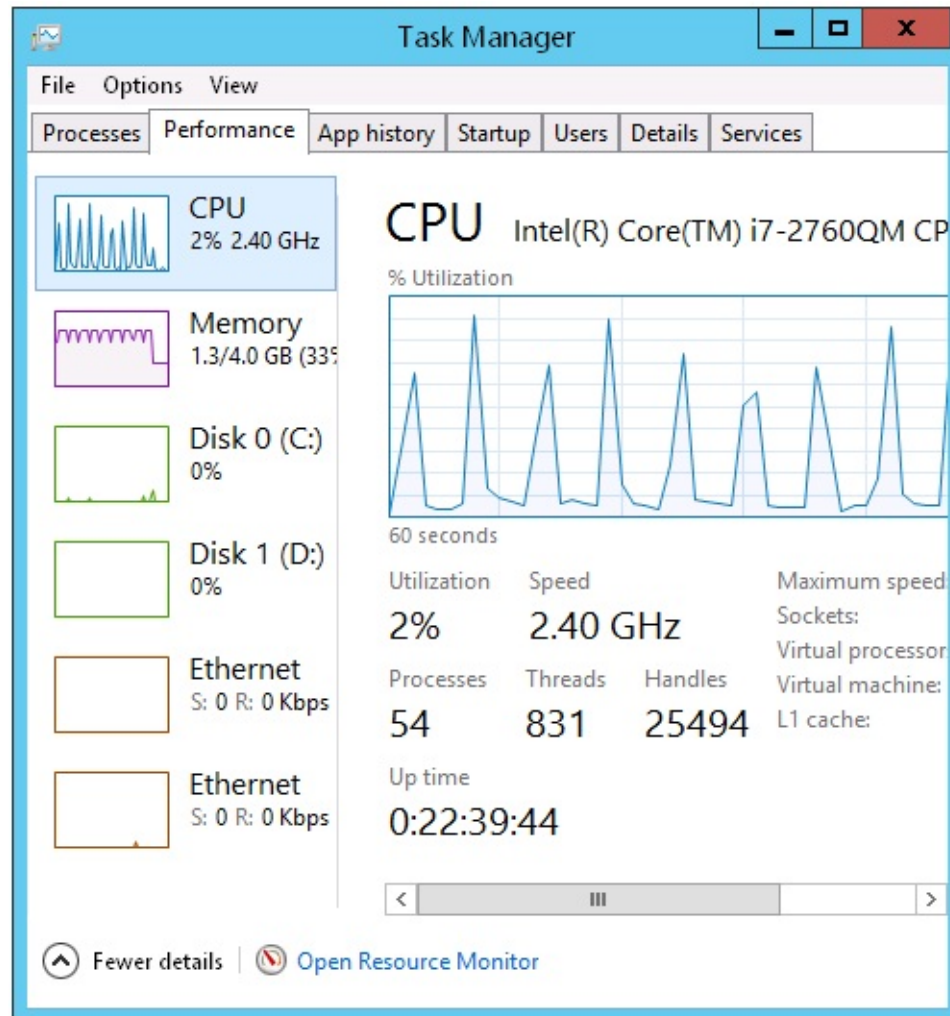
6. In the *generateGraphData* method, change the *for* loop to a statement that calls the static *Parallel.For* method, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
private void generateGraphData(byte[] data)
{
    Parallel.For(0, pixelWidth / 2, x => calculateData(x, data));
}
```

This code is the parallel equivalent of the original *for* loop. It iterates through the values from 0 to  $\text{pixelWidth} / 2 - 1$  inclusive. Each invocation runs by using a task, and each task might run more than one iteration. The *Parallel.For* method finishes only when all the tasks it has created complete their work. Remember that the *Parallel.For* method expects the final parameter to be a method that takes a single integer parameter. It calls this method passing the current loop index as the parameter. In this example, the *calculateData* method does not match the required signature because it takes two parameters: an integer and a byte array. For this reason, the code uses a lambda expression that acts as an adapter that calls the *calculateData* method with the appropriate arguments.

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
8. In the Graph Demo window, click Plot Graph. When the graph appears in the Graph Demo window, record the time taken to generate the graph. Repeat this action several times to get an average value.

You should notice that the application runs at a comparable speed to the previous version that used *Task* objects (and possibly slightly faster, depending on the number of CPUs you have available). If you examine Task Manager, you should notice that the CPU usage peaks closer to 100 percent regardless of whether you have a dual-core or quad-core computer.



9. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## When not to use the *Parallel* class

You should be aware that despite appearances and the best efforts of the .NET Framework development team at Microsoft, the *Parallel* class is not magic—you cannot use it without due consideration and just expect your applications to suddenly run significantly faster and produce the same results. The purpose of the *Parallel* class is to parallelize compute-bound, independent areas of your code.

If your code is not compute-bound, parallelizing it might not improve performance. The overhead of creating a task, running this task on a separate thread, and waiting for the task to complete is likely to be greater than the cost of

running this method directly. The additional overhead might account for only a few milliseconds each time a method is called, but you should bear in mind the number of times that a method runs. If the method call is located in a nested loop and is executed thousands of times, all of these small overhead costs will add up. The general rule is to use *Parallel.Invoke* only when it is worthwhile. You should reserve *Parallel.Invoke* for operations that are computationally intensive; otherwise, the overhead of creating and managing tasks can actually slow down an application.

The other key consideration for using the *Parallel* class is that parallel operations should be independent. For example, if you attempt to use *Parallel.For* to parallelize a loop in which iterations have a dependency on each other, the results will be unpredictable.

To see what I mean, look at the following code:

```
using System;
using System.Threading;
using System.Threading.Tasks;
namespace ParallelLoop
{
    class Program
    {
        private static int accumulator = 0;
        static void Main(string[] args)
        {
            for (int i = 0; i < 100; i++)
            {
                AddToAccumulator(i);
            }
            Console.WriteLine("Accumulator is {0}", accumulator);
        }
        private static void AddToAccumulator(int data)
        {
            if ((accumulator % 2) == 0)
            {
                accumulator += data;
            }
            else
            {
                accumulator -= data;
            }
        }
    }
}
```

```
}
```

This program iterates through the values from 0 to 99 and calls the *AddToAccumulator* method with each value in turn. The *AddToAccumulator* method examines the current value of the *accumulator* variable and, if it is even, adds the value of the parameter to the *accumulator* variable; otherwise, it subtracts the value of the parameter. At the end of the program, the result is displayed. You can find this application in the ParallelLoop solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 23\ParallelLoop folder in your Documents folder. If you run this program, the value output should be  $-100$ .

To increase the degree of parallelism in this simple application, you might be tempted to replace the *for* loop in the *Main* method with *Parallel.For*, like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    Parallel.For (0, 100, AddToAccumulator);
    Console.WriteLine("Accumulator is {0}", accumulator);
}
```

However, there is no guarantee that the tasks created to run the various invocations of the *AddToAccumulator* method will execute in any specific sequence. (The code is also not thread-safe because multiple threads running the tasks might attempt to modify the *accumulator* variable concurrently.) The value calculated by the *AddToAccumulator* method depends on the sequence being maintained, so the result of this modification is that the application might now generate different values each time it runs. In this simple case, you might not actually see any difference in the value calculated because the *AddToAccumulator* method runs very quickly and the .NET Framework might elect to run each invocation sequentially by using the same thread. However, if you make the following change (shown in bold) to the *AddToAccumulator* method, you will get different results:

```
private static void AddToAccumulator(int data)
{
    if ((accumulator % 2) == 0)
    {
        accumulator += data;
    }
}
```

```

        Thread.Sleep(10); // wait for 10 milliseconds
    }
    else
    {
        accumulator -= data;
    }
}

```

The *Thread.Sleep* method simply causes the current thread to wait for the specified period of time. This modification simulates the thread, performing additional processing, and affects the way in which the *Parallel* class schedules the tasks, which now run on different threads, resulting in a different sequence.

The general rule is to use *Parallel.For* and *Parallel.ForEach* only if you can guarantee that each iteration of the loop is independent, and test your code thoroughly. A similar consideration applies to *Parallel.Invoke*: use this construct to make method calls only if they are independent and the application does not depend on them being run in a particular sequence.

## Canceling tasks and handling exceptions

A common requirement of applications that perform long-running operations is the ability to stop those operations if necessary. However, you should not simply abort a task because this could leave the data in your application in an indeterminate state. Instead, the *Task* class implements a cooperative cancellation strategy. Cooperative cancellation enables a task to select a convenient point at which to stop processing and also enables it to undo any work it has performed prior to cancellation if necessary.

### The mechanics of cooperative cancellation

Cooperative cancellation is based on the notion of a *cancellation token*. A cancellation token is a structure that represents a request to cancel one or more tasks. The method that a task runs should include a *System.Threading.CancellationToken* parameter. An application that wants to cancel the task sets the Boolean *IsCancellationRequested* property of this parameter to *true*. The method running in the task can query this property at various points during its processing. If this property is set to *true* at any point, it

knows that the application has requested that the task be canceled. Also, the method knows what work it has done so far, so it can undo any changes if necessary and then finish. Alternatively, the method can simply ignore the request and continue running.

#### TIP

You should examine the cancellation token in a task frequently, but not so frequently that you adversely impact the performance of the task. If possible, you should aim to check for cancellation at least every 10 milliseconds, but no more frequently than every millisecond.

An application obtains a *CancellationToken* by creating a *System.Threading.CancellationTokenSource* object and querying the *Token* property of this object. The application can then pass this *CancellationToken* object as a parameter to any methods started by tasks that the application creates and runs. If the application needs to cancel the tasks, it calls the *Cancel* method of the *CancellationTokenSource* object. This method sets the *IsCancellationRequested* property of the *CancellationToken* passed to all the tasks.

The code example that follows shows how to create a cancellation token and use it to cancel a task. The *initiateTasks* method instantiates the *cancellationTokenSource* variable and obtains a reference to the *CancellationToken* object available through this variable. The code then creates and runs a task that executes the *doWork* method. Later on, the code calls the *Cancel* method of the cancellation token source, which sets the cancellation token. The *doWork* method queries the *IsCancellationRequested* property of the cancellation token. If the property is set, the method terminates; otherwise, it continues running.

```
public class MyApplication
{
    ...
    // Method that creates and manages a task
    private void initiateTasks()
    {
        // Create the cancellation token source and obtain a cancellation token
        CancellationTokenSource cancellationTokenSource = new
        CancellationTokenSource();
```



```

cancellationTokenSource(),
    CancellationToken cancellationToken = cancellationTokenSource.Token;
    // Create a task and start it running the doWork method
    Task myTask = Task.Run(() => doWork(cancellationToken));
    ...
    if (...)
    {
        // Cancel the task
        cancellationTokenSource.Cancel();
    }
    ...
}
// Method run by the task
private void doWork(CancellationToken token)
{
    ...
    // If the application has set the cancellation token, finish processing
    if (token.IsCancellationRequested)
    {
        // Tidy up and finish
        ...
        return;
    }
    // If the task has not been canceled, continue running as normal
    ...
}
}

```

As well as providing a high degree of control over the cancellation processing, this approach is scalable across any number of tasks; you can start multiple tasks and pass the same *CancellationToken* object to each of them. If you call *Cancel* on the *CancellationTokenSource* object, each task will check that the *IsCancellationRequested* property has been set and proceed accordingly.

You can also register a callback method (in the form of an *Action* delegate) with the cancellation token by using the *Register* method. When an application invokes the *Cancel* method of the corresponding *CancellationTokenSource* object, this callback runs. However, you cannot guarantee when this method executes; it might be before or after the tasks have performed their own cancellation processing, or even during that process.

```

...
cancellationToken.Register(doAdditionalWork);
...
private void doAdditionalWork()

```

```
private void DoAdditionalWork()
{
    // Perform additional cancellation processing
}
```

In the next exercise, you will add cancellation functionality to the GraphDemo application.

Add cancellation functionality to the GraphDemo application

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, open the GraphDemo solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 23\GraphDemo With Cancellation folder in your Documents folder.

This is a completed copy of the GraphDemo application from the earlier exercise that uses tasks to improve processing throughput. The user interface also includes a button named *cancelButton* that the user will be able to use to stop the tasks that calculate the data for the graph.

2. In Solution Explorer, in the GraphDemo project, double-click GraphWindow.xaml to display the form in the Design View window. Note the Cancel button that appears in the left pane of the form.
3. Open the GraphWindow.xaml.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. Locate the *cancelButton\_Click* method.

This method runs when the user clicks Cancel. It is currently empty.

4. Add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using System.Threading;
```

The types used by cooperative cancellation reside in this namespace.

5. Add a *CancellationTokenSource* field called *tokenSource* to the *GraphWindow* class, and initialize it to *null*, as shown in the following code in bold:

```
public class GraphWindow : Page
{
    ...
    private byte redValue, greenValue, blueValue;
```

```

        private CancellationTokenSource tokenSource = null;
        ...
    }

```

6. Find the *generateGraphData* method and add a *CancellationToken* parameter called *token* to the method definition, as shown here in bold:

```

private void generateGraphData(byte[] data, int partitionStart, int
partitionEnd,
CancellationToken token)
{
    ...
}

```

7. In the *generateGraphData* method, at the start of the inner *for* loop, add the following code shown in bold to check whether cancellation has been requested. If so, return from the method; otherwise, continue calculating values and plotting the graph.

```

private void generateGraphData(byte[] data, int partitionStart, int
partitionEnd,
CancellationToken token)
{
    int a = pixelWidth / 2;
    int b = a * a;
    int c = pixelHeight / 2;
    for (int x = partitionStart; x < partitionEnd; x++)
    {
        int s = x * x;
        double p = Math.Sqrt(b - s);
        for (double i = -p; i < p; i += 3)
        {
            if (token.IsCancellationRequested)
            {
                return;
            }
            double r = Math.Sqrt(s + i * i) / a;
            double q = (r - 1) * Math.Sin(24 * r);
            double y = i / 3 + (q * c);
            plotXY(data, (int)(-x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight
2)));
            plotXY(data, (int)(x + (pixelWidth / 2)), (int)(y + (pixelHeight
2)));
        }
    }
}

```

```

    }
}

```

8. In the *plotButton\_Click* method, add the following statements shown in bold that instantiate the *tokenSource* variable and retrieve the *CancellationToken* object into a variable called *token*:

```

private void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    Random rand = new Random();
    redValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    greenValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    blueValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    tokenSource = new CancellationTokenSource();
    CancellationToken token = tokenSource.Token;
    ...
}

```

9. Modify the statements that create and run the two tasks, and pass the *token* variable as the final parameter to the *generateGraphData* method:

```

...
Task first = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, 0, pixelWidth / 4,
token));
Task second = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, pixelWidth - 4,
pixelWidth - 2, token));
...

```

10. Edit the definition of the *plotButton\_Click* method and add the *async* modifier as shown in bold here:

```

private async void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    ...
}

```

11. In the body of the *plotButton\_Click* method, comment out the *Task.WaitAll* statement that waits for the tasks to complete and replace it with the following statements in bold that use the *await* operator, instead.

```

...

```

```
// Task.WaitAll(first, second);  
await first;  
await second;  
duration.Text = string.Format(...);  
...
```

The changes in these two steps are necessary because of the single-threaded nature of the Windows user interface. Under normal circumstances, when an event handler for a user interface component such as a button starts running, event handlers for other user interface components are blocked until the first event handler completes (even if the event handler is using tasks). In this example, using the *Task.WaitAll* method to wait for the tasks to complete would render the Cancel button useless, because the event handler for the Cancel button will not run until the handler for the Plot Graph button completes, in which case there is no point in attempting to cancel the operation. In fact, as mentioned earlier, when you click the Plot Graph button the user interface is completely unresponsive until the graph appears and the *plotButton\_Click* method finishes.

The *await* operator is designed to handle situations such as this. You can use this operator only inside a method marked as *async*. Its purpose is to release the current thread and wait for a task to complete in the background. When that task finishes, control returns to the method, which continues with the next statement. In this example, the two *await* statements simply allow each of the tasks to complete in the background. After the second task has finished, the method continues, displaying the time taken for these tasks to complete in the duration *TextBlock*. Note that it is not an error to await for a task that has already completed; the *await* operator will simply return immediately and pass control to the following statement.

#### MORE INFO

[Chapter 24](#) discusses the *async* modifier and the *await* operator in detail.

12. Find the *cancelButton\_Click* method. Add to this method the code shown

here in bold:

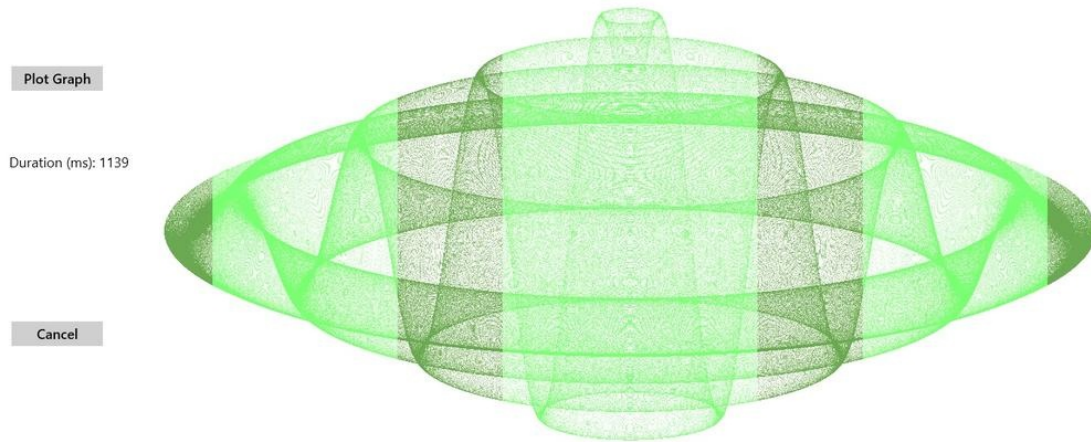
```
private void cancelButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    if (tokenSource != null)
    {
        tokenSource.Cancel();
    }
}
```

This code checks that the *tokenSource* variable has been instantiated. If it has, the code invokes the *Cancel* method on this variable.

13. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
14. In the GraphDemo window, click Plot Graph, and verify that the graph appears as it did before. However, you should notice that it takes slightly longer to generate the graph than before. This is because of the additional check performed by the *generateGraphData* method.
15. Click Plot Graph again, and then quickly click Cancel.

If you are quick and click Cancel before the data for the graph is generated, this action causes the methods being run by the tasks to return. The data is not complete, so the graph appears with “holes,” as shown in the following figure. (The previous graph should still be visible where these holes occur, and the size of the holes depends on how quickly you clicked Cancel.)

## Graph Demo



Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

You can determine whether a task completed or was canceled by examining the *Status* property of the *Task* object. The *Status* property contains a value from the *System.Threading.Tasks.TaskStatus* enumeration. The following list describes some of the status values that you might commonly encounter (there are others):

- **Created.** This is the initial state of a task. It has been created but has not yet been scheduled to run.
- **WaitingToRun.** The task has been scheduled but has not yet started to run.
- **Running.** The task is currently being executed by a thread.
- **RanToCompletion.** The task completed successfully without any unhandled exceptions.
- **Canceled.** The task was canceled before it could start running, or it acknowledged cancellation and completed without throwing an exception.
- **Faulted.** The task terminated because of an exception.

In the next exercise, you will attempt to report the status of each task so that you can see when tasks have completed and when they have been canceled.

can see when they have completed or have been canceled.

**CANCELING A *PARALLEL.FOR* OR *FOREACH* LOOP THE *PARALLEL.FOR* AND *PARALLEL.FOREACH* METHODS DON'T PROVIDE YOU WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO THE *TASK* OBJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED. INDEED, YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW MANY TASKS ARE RUNNING—THE .NET FRAMEWORK USES ITS OWN HEURISTICS TO WORK OUT THE OPTIMAL NUMBER TO USE BASED ON THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND THE CURRENT WORKLOAD OF THE COMPUTER.**

**IF YOU WANT TO STOP THE *PARALLEL.FOR* OR *PARALLEL.FOREACH* METHOD EARLY, YOU MUST USE A *PARALLELLOOPSTATE* OBJECT. THE METHOD YOU SPECIFY AS THE BODY OF THE LOOP MUST INCLUDE AN ADDITIONAL *PARALLELLOOPSTATE* PARAMETER. THE *PARALLEL* CLASS CREATES A *PARALLELLOOPSTATE* OBJECT AND PASSES IT AS THIS PARAMETER INTO THE METHOD. THE *PARALLEL* CLASS USES THIS OBJECT TO HOLD INFORMATION ABOUT EACH METHOD INVOCATION. THE METHOD CAN CALL THE *STOP* METHOD OF THIS OBJECT TO INDICATE THAT THE *PARALLEL* CLASS SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO PERFORM ANY ITERATIONS BEYOND THOSE THAT HAVE ALREADY STARTED AND FINISHED. THE EXAMPLE THAT FOLLOWS SHOWS THE *PARALLEL.FOR* METHOD CALLING THE *DOLOOPWORK* METHOD FOR EACH ITERATION. THE *DOLOOPWORK* METHOD EXAMINES THE ITERATION VARIABLE; IF IT IS GREATER THAN 600, THE METHOD CALLS THE *STOP* METHOD OF THE *PARALLELLOOPSTATE* PARAMETER. THIS CAUSES THE *PARALLEL.FOR* METHOD TO STOP RUNNING FURTHER ITERATIONS OF THE LOOP. (ITERATIONS CURRENTLY RUNNING MIGHT CONTINUE TO COMPLETION.)**

## **NOTE**

**REMEMBER THAT THE ITERATIONS IN A *PARALLEL.FOR* LOOP ARE NOT RUN IN A SPECIFIC SEQUENCE. CONSEQUENTLY, CANCELING THE LOOP WHEN THE ITERATION VARIABLE HAS THE VALUE 600 DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT THE PREVIOUS 599 ITERATIONS HAVE ALREADY RUN. LIKEWISE, SOME ITERATIONS WITH VALUES GREATER THAN 600 MIGHT ALREADY HAVE COMPLETED.**

```
Parallel.For(0, 1000, doLoopWork);  
...  
private void doLoopWork(int i, ParallelLoopState p)  
{  
    ...  
    if (i > 600)  
    {  
        p.Stop();  
    }  
}
```



Display the status of each task

1. In Visual Studio, display the `GraphWindow.xaml` file in the Design View window. In the XAML pane, add the following markup to the definition of the `GraphWindow` form before the penultimate `</Grid>` tag, as shown in the following in bold:

```
<Image x:Name="graphImage" Grid.Column="1" Stretch="Fill" >
    <Grid>
        <TextBlock x:Name="messages" Grid.Row="4" FontSize="18"
HorizontalAlignment="Left"/>
    </Grid>
</Grid>
</ScrollView>
</Page>
```

This markup adds a *TextBlock* control named *messages* to the bottom of the form.

2. Display the `GraphWindow.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window and find the *plotButton\_Click* method.
3. Add to this method the code in bold that follows. These statements generate a string that contains the status of each task after it has finished running, and then they display this string in the *messages TextBlock* control at the bottom of the form.

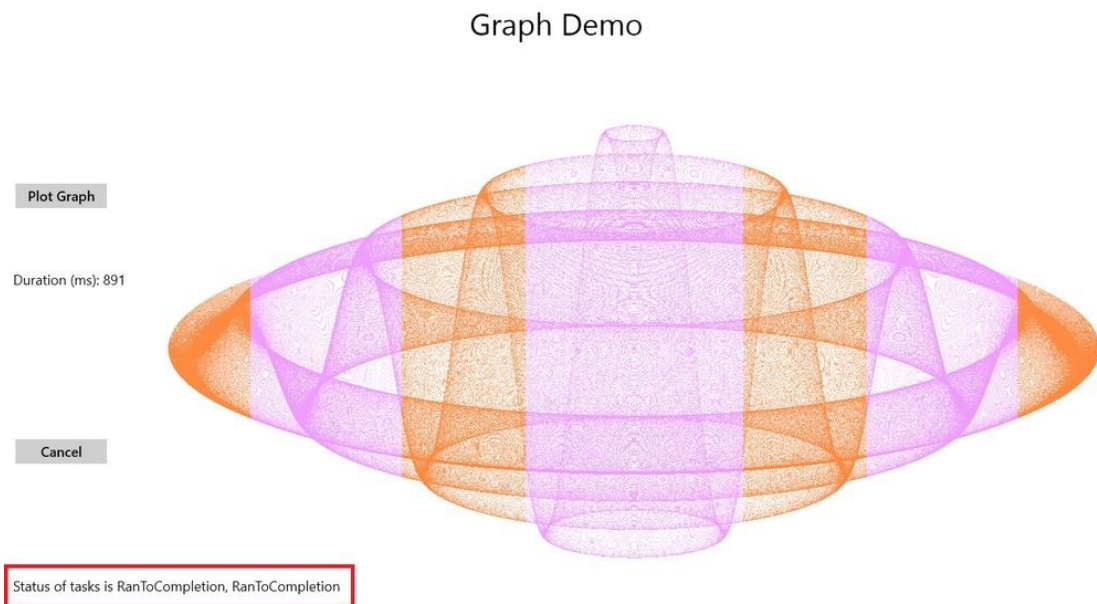
```
private async void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    ...
    await first;
    await second;
    duration.Text = string.Format(...);
    string message = string.Format("Status of tasks is {0}, {1}",
        first.Status, second.Status);
    messages.Text = message;
    ...
}
```

4. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
5. In the GraphDemo window, click Plot Graph but do not click Cancel. Verify that the message displayed reports that the status of the tasks is *RanToCompletion* (two times).
6. In the GraphDemo window, click Plot Graph again, and then quickly click Cancel.

Surprisingly, the message that appears still reports the status of each task as *RanToCompletion*, even though the graph appears with holes.

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This behavior occurs because although you sent a cancellation request to each task by using the cancellation token, the methods they were running simply returned. The .NET Framework runtime does not know whether the tasks were actually canceled or whether they were allowed to run to completion, and it simply ignored the cancellation requests.

7. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

So, how do you indicate that a task has been canceled rather than allowed to run to completion? The answer lies in the *CancellationToken* object passed as a parameter to the method that the task is running. The *CancellationToken* class

provides a method called *ThrowIfCancellationRequested*. This method tests the *IsCancellationRequested* property of a cancellation token; if it is *true*, the method throws an *OperationCanceledException* exception and aborts the method that the task is running.

The application that started the thread should be prepared to catch and handle this exception, but this leads to another question. If a task terminates by throwing an exception, it actually reverts to the *Faulted* state. This is true, even if the exception is an *OperationCanceledException* exception. A task enters the *Canceled* state only if it is canceled without throwing an exception. So, how does a task throw an *OperationCanceledException* without it being treated as an exception?

This time, the answer lies in the task itself. For a task to recognize that an *OperationCanceledException* exception is the result of canceling the task in a controlled manner and not just an exception caused by other circumstances, it has to know that the operation has actually been canceled. It can do this only if it can examine the cancellation token. You passed this token as a parameter to the method run by the task, but the task does not actually check any of these parameters. Instead, you specify the cancellation token when you create and run the task. The code that follows shows an example based on the GraphDemo application. Notice how the *token* parameter is passed to the *generateGraphData* method (as before), but also as a separate parameter to the *Run* method.

```
tokenSource = new CancellationTokenSource();
CancellationToken token = tokenSource.Token;
...
Task first = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, 0, pixelWidth / 4, token),
    token);
```

Now, when the method being run by the task throws an *OperationCanceledException* exception, the infrastructure behind the task examines the *CancellationToken*. If it indicates that the task has been canceled, the infrastructure sets the status of the task to *Canceled*. If you are using the *await* operator to wait for the tasks to complete, you also need to be prepared to catch and handle the *OperationCanceledException* exception. This is what you will do in the next exercise.

Acknowledge cancellation, and handle the *OperationCanceledException*

exception

1. In Visual Studio, return to the Code and Text Editor window displaying the `GraphWindow.xaml.cs` file. In the `plotButton_Click` method, modify the statements that create and run the tasks and specify the *CancellationToken* object as the second parameter to the *Run* method, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
private async void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    ...
    tokenSource = new CancellationTokenSource();
    CancellationToken token = tokenSource.Token;
    ...
    Task first = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, 0, pixelWidth / 4,
token), token);
    Task second = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, pixelWidth 4,
pixelWidth 2, token), token);
    ...
}
```

2. Add a *try* block around the statements that create and run the tasks, wait for them to complete, and display the elapsed time. Add a *catch* block that handles the *OperationCanceledException* exception. In this exception handler, display the reason for the exception reported in the *Message* property of the exception object in the *duration TextBlock* control. The following code shown in bold highlights the changes you should make:

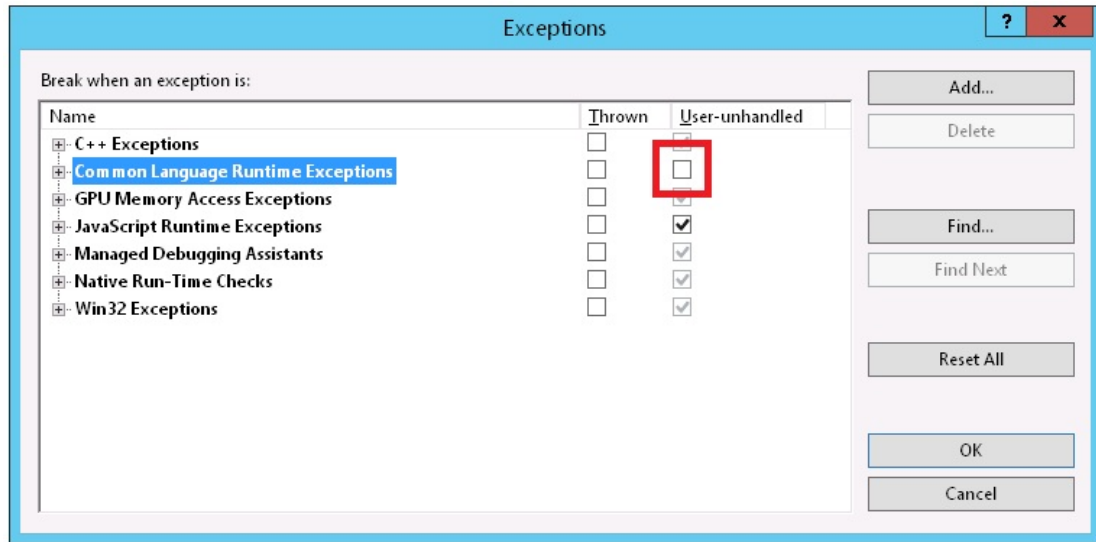
```
private async void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    ...
    try
    {
        await first;
        await second;
        duration.Text = string.Format("Duration (ms): {0}",
watch.ElapsedMilliseconds);
    }
    catch (OperationCanceledException oce)
    {
        duration.Text = oce.Message;
    }
    string message = string.Format(...);
}
```

```
    ...  
}
```

3. In the *generateDataForGraph* method, comment out the *if* statement that examines the *IsCancellationProperty* of the *CancellationToken* object and add a statement that calls the *ThrowIfCancellationRequested* method, as shown here in bold:

```
private void generateDataForGraph(byte[] data, int partitionStart, int  
partitionEnd,  
CancellationToken token)  
{  
    ...  
    for (int x = partitionStart; x < partitionEnd; x++);  
    {  
        ...  
        for (double i = -p; i < p; i += 3)  
        {  
            //if (token.IsCancellationRequired)  
            //{  
            //    return;  
            //}  
            token.ThrowIfCancellationRequested();  
            ...  
        }  
    }  
    ...  
}
```

4. On the Debug menu, click Exceptions. In the Exceptions dialog box, clear the User-unhandled check box for Common Language Runtime Exceptions, and then click OK.

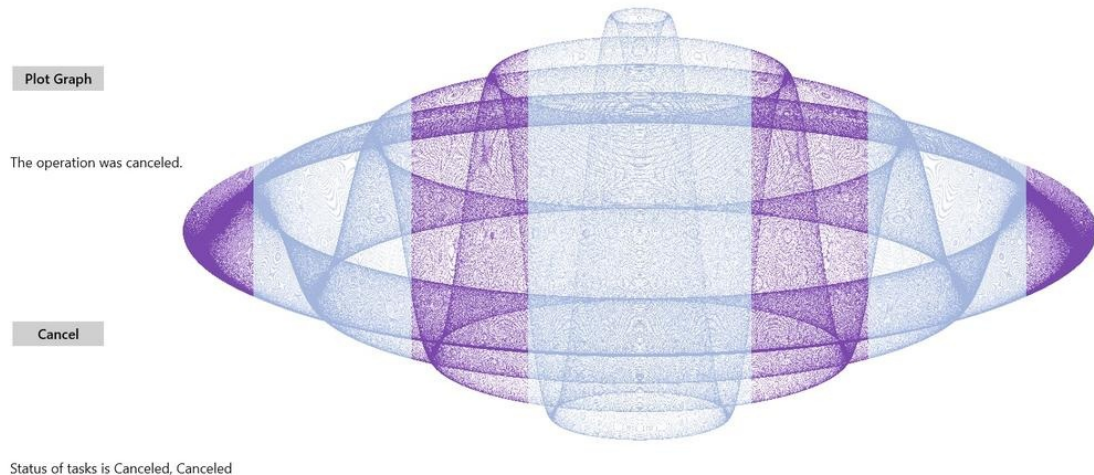


This configuration is necessary to prevent the Visual Studio debugger from intercepting the *OperationCanceledException* exception that you will generate when you run the application in debug mode.

5. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
6. In the Graph Demo window, click Plot Graph, wait for the graph to appear, and verify that the status of both tasks is reported as *RanToCompletion* and the graph is generated.
7. Click Plot Graph again, and then quickly click Cancel.

If you are quick, the status of one or both tasks should be reported as *Canceled*, the *duration TextBox* control should display the text “The operation was canceled,” and the graph should be displayed with holes. If you were not quick enough, repeat this step to try again.

## Graph Demo



Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

8. On the Debug menu, click Exceptions. In the Exceptions dialog box, select the User-unhandled check box for Common Language Runtime Exceptions, and then click OK.

**HANDLING TASK EXCEPTIONS BY USING THE *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* CLASS YOU HAVE SEEN THROUGHOUT THIS BOOK THAT EXCEPTION HANDLING IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN ANY COMMERCIAL APPLICATION. THE EXCEPTION HANDLING CONSTRUCTS YOU HAVE MET SO FAR ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD TO USE, AND IF YOU USE THEM CAREFULLY IT IS A SIMPLE MATTER TO TRAP AN EXCEPTION AND DETERMINE WHICH PIECE OF CODE RAISED IT. WHEN YOU START DIVIDING WORK INTO MULTIPLE CONCURRENT TASKS, THOUGH, TRACKING AND HANDLING EXCEPTIONS BECOMES A MORE COMPLEX PROBLEM. THE PREVIOUS EXERCISE SHOWED HOW YOU CAN CATCH THE *OPERATIONCANCELEDEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION THAT IS THROWN WHEN YOU CANCEL A TASK. HOWEVER, THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER EXCEPTIONS THAT MIGHT ALSO OCCUR, AND DIFFERENT TASKS MIGHT EACH GENERATE THEIR OWN EXCEPTIONS. THEREFORE, YOU NEED A WAY TO CATCH AND HANDLE MULTIPLE EXCEPTIONS THAT MIGHT BE THROWN CONCURRENTLY.**

**IF YOU ARE USING ONE OF THE *TASK* WAIT METHODS TO WAIT FOR MULTIPLE TASKS TO COMPLETE (USING THE INSTANCE *WAIT* METHOD OR THE STATIC *TASK.WAITALL* AND *TASK.WAITANY* METHODS), ANY**

EXCEPTIONS THROWN BY THE METHODS THAT THESE TASKS ARE RUNNING ARE GATHERED TOGETHER INTO A SINGLE EXCEPTION REFERRED TO AS AN *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION. AN *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION ACTS AS A WRAPPER FOR A COLLECTION OF EXCEPTIONS. EACH OF THE EXCEPTIONS IN THE COLLECTION MIGHT BE THROWN BY DIFFERENT TASKS. IN YOUR APPLICATION, YOU CAN CATCH THE *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION AND THEN ITERATE THROUGH THIS COLLECTION AND PERFORM ANY NECESSARY PROCESSING. TO HELP YOU, THE *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* CLASS PROVIDES THE *HANDLE* METHOD. THE *HANDLE* METHOD TAKES A *FUNC<EXCEPTION, BOOL>* DELEGATE WHICH REFERENCES A METHOD THAT TAKES AN *EXCEPTION* OBJECT AS ITS PARAMETER AND RETURNS A BOOLEAN VALUE. WHEN YOU CALL *HANDLE*, THE REFERENCED METHOD RUNS FOR EACH EXCEPTION IN THE COLLECTION IN THE *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* OBJECT. THE REFERENCED METHOD CAN EXAMINE THE EXCEPTION AND TAKE THE APPROPRIATE ACTION. IF THE REFERENCED METHOD HANDLES THE EXCEPTION, IT SHOULD RETURN *TRUE*. IF NOT, IT SHOULD RETURN *FALSE*. WHEN THE *HANDLE* METHOD COMPLETES, ANY UNHANDLED EXCEPTIONS ARE BUNDLED TOGETHER INTO A NEW *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION, AND THIS EXCEPTION IS THROWN. A SUBSEQUENT OUTER EXCEPTION HANDLER CAN THEN CATCH THIS EXCEPTION AND PROCESS IT.

THE CODE FRAGMENT THAT FOLLOWS SHOWS AN EXAMPLE OF A METHOD THAT CAN BE REGISTERED WITH AN *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION HANDLER. THIS METHOD SIMPLY DISPLAYS THE MESSAGE “DIVISION BY ZERO OCCURRED” IF IT DETECTS A *DIVIDEBYZEROEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION, OR THE MESSAGE “ARRAY INDEX OUT OF BOUNDS” IF AN *INDEXOUTOFRANGEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION OCCURS. ANY OTHER EXCEPTIONS ARE LEFT UNHANDLED.

```
PRIVATE BOOL HANDLEEXCEPTION(EXCEPTION E)
{
    IF (E IS DIVIDEBYZEROEXCEPTION)
    {
        DISPLAYERRORMESSAGE("DIVISION BY ZERO OCCURRED");
        RETURN TRUE;
    }
    IF (E IS INDEXOUTOFRANGEEXCEPTION)
    {
        DISPLAYERRORMESSAGE("ARRAY INDEX OUT OF BOUNDS");
        RETURN TRUE;
    }
    RETURN FALSE;
}
```

WHEN YOU USE ONE OF THE *TASK WAIT* METHODS, YOU CAN CATCH THE *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION AND REGISTER THE *HANDLEEXCEPTION* METHOD, LIKE THIS:



```

        TRY
        {
            TASK FIRST = TASK.RUN(...);
            TASK SECOND = TASK.RUN(...);
            TASK.WAITALL(FIRST, SECOND);
        }
        CATCH (AGGREGATEEXCEPTION AE)
        {
            AE.HANDLE(HANDLEEXCEPTION);
        }

```

IF ANY OF THE TASKS GENERATE A *DIVIDEBYZEROEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION OR AN *INDEXOUTOFRANGEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION, THE *HANDLEEXCEPTION* METHOD WILL DISPLAY AN APPROPRIATE MESSAGE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXCEPTION AS HANDLED. ANY OTHER EXCEPTIONS ARE CLASSIFIED AS UNHANDLED AND WILL PROPAGATE OUT FROM THE *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION HANDLER IN THE CUSTOMARY MANNER.

THERE IS ONE ADDITIONAL COMPLICATION OF WHICH YOU SHOULD BE AWARE. WHEN YOU CANCEL A TASK, YOU HAVE SEEN THAT THE CLR THROWS AN *OPERATIONCANCELEDEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION, AND THIS IS THE EXCEPTION THAT IS REPORTED IF YOU ARE USING THE *AWAIT* OPERATOR TO WAIT FOR THE TASK. HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE USING ONE OF THE *TASK* WAIT METHODS, THIS EXCEPTION IS TRANSFORMED INTO A *TASKCANCELEDEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION, AND THIS IS THE TYPE OF EXCEPTION THAT YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO HANDLE IN THE *AGGREGATEEXCEPTION* EXCEPTION HANDLER.

## Using continuations with canceled and faulted tasks

If you need to perform additional work when a task is canceled or raises an unhandled exception, remember that you can use the *ContinueWith* method with the appropriate *TaskContinuationOptions* value. For example, the following code creates a task that runs the method *doWork*. If the task is canceled, the *ContinueWith* method specifies that another task should be created and run the method *doCancellationWork*. This method can perform some simple logging or tidying up. If the task is not canceled, the continuation does not run.

```

Task task = new Task(doWork);
task.ContinueWith(doCancellationWork, TaskContinuationOptions.OnlyOnCanceled);
task.Start();
...

```

```

private void doWork()
{
    // The task runs this code when it is started
    ...
}
...
private void doCancellationWork(Task task)
{
    // The task runs this code when doWork completes
    ...
}

```

Similarly, you can specify the value *TaskContinuationOptions.OnlyOnFaulted* to specify a continuation that runs if the original method run by the task raises an unhandled exception.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned why it is important to write applications that can scale across multiple processors and processor cores. You saw how to use the *Task* class to run operations in parallel, and how to synchronize concurrent operations and wait for them to complete. You learned how to use the *Parallel* class to parallelize some common programming constructs, and you also saw when it is inappropriate to parallelize code. You used tasks and threads together in a graphical user interface to improve responsiveness and throughput, and you saw how to cancel tasks in a clean and controlled manner.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 24**.
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

| To                       | Do this  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Create a task and run it | Use the static <i>Run</i> method of the <i>Task</i> class to create and run the task in a single step: |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <pre> Task task = Task.Run(() =&gt; doWork()); ... private void doWork() {     // The task runs this code when it is started     ... } </pre> <p>Or, create a new <i>Task</i> object that references a method to run and call the <i>Start</i> method:</p> <pre> Task task = new Task(doWork); task.Start(); </pre> |
| Wait for a task to finish                                       | <p>Call the <i>Wait</i> method of the <i>Task</i> object:</p> <pre> Task task = ...; ... task.Wait(); </pre> <p>Or, use the <i>await</i> operator (only in an async method):</p> <pre> await task; </pre>   |
| Wait for several tasks to finish                                | <p>Call the static <i>WaitAll</i> method of the <i>Task</i> class, and specify the tasks to wait for:</p> <pre> Task task1 = ...; Task task2 = ...; Task task3 = ...; Task task4 = ...; ... Task.WaitAll(task1, task2, task3, task4); </pre>  |
| Specify a method to run in a new task when a task has completed | <p>Call the <i>ContinueWith</i> method of the task and specify the method as a continuation:</p> <pre> Task task = new Task(doWork); task.ContinueWith(doMoreWork,     TaskContinuationOptions.NotOnFaulted); </pre>  |
|   |   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Perform loop iterations and statement sequences by using parallel tasks</p> | <p>Use the <i>Parallel.For</i> and <i>Parallel.ForEach</i> methods to perform loop iterations by using tasks:</p> <pre>Parallel.For(0, 100, performLoopProcessing); ... private void performLoopProcessing(int x) {     // Perform loop processing }</pre> <p>Use the <i>Parallel.Invoke</i> method to perform concurrent method calls by using separate tasks:</p> <pre>Parallel.Invoke(     doWork,     doMoreWork,     doYetMoreWork );</pre>  |
| <p>Handle exceptions raised by one or more tasks</p>                           | <p>Catch the <i>AggregateException</i> exception. Use the <i>Handle</i> method to specify a method that can handle each exception in the <i>AggregateException</i> object. If the exception-handling method handles the exception, return <i>true</i>; otherwise, return <i>false</i>:</p> <pre>try {     Task task = Task.Run(...);     task.Wait();     ... } catch (AggregateException ae) {     ae.Handle(handleException); } ... private bool handleException(Exception e) {     if (e is TaskCanceledException)     {         ...         return true;     }     else     {         ...     } }</pre> |

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
|                               | <pre>        return false;     } }</pre>  |
| Enable cancellation in a task | <p>Implement cooperative cancellation by creating a <i>CancellationTokenSource</i> object and using a <i>CancellationToken</i> parameter in the method run by the task. In the task method, call the <i>ThrowIfCancellationRequested</i> method of the <i>CancellationToken</i> parameter to throw an <i>OperationCanceledException</i> exception and terminate the task:</p> <pre>private void generateGraphData(..., CancellationToken token) {     ...     token.ThrowIfCancellationRequested();     ... }</pre> |

# Chapter 24. Improving response time by performing asynchronous operations

---

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Implementing asynchronous methods
- Using PLINQ to parallelize declarative data access
- The concurrent collection classes

Chapter 23 demonstrates how to use the *Task* class to perform operations in parallel and improve throughput in compute-bound applications. However, while maximizing the processing power available to an application can make it run more quickly, responsiveness is also important. Remember that the Microsoft Windows user interface operates by using a single thread of execution, but users expect an application to respond when they click a button on a form, even if the application is currently performing a large and complex calculation.

Additionally, some tasks might take a considerable time to run even if they are not compute-bound (a task waiting to receive information across the network from a website, for example), and blocking user interaction while waiting for an event that might take an indeterminate time to happen is clearly not good design practice. The solution to both of these problems is the same: perform the task asynchronously and leave the user interface thread free to handle user interactions. In the past, this approach was traditionally fraught with complexity, and user interface frameworks such as the Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF) had to implement some rather messy workarounds to support this mode of working. Fortunately, Windows 8.1 and the Windows Runtime (WinRT) have been designed with asynchronicity in mind, and the C# language has been extended to take advantage of the asynchronous features that Windows 8.1 now

provides, making it much easier to define asynchronous operations. You will learn about these features and how to use them in conjunction with tasks in the first part of this chapter.

Issues with response time are not limited to user interfaces. For example, **Chapter 21** shows how you can access data held in memory in a declarative manner by using Language-Integrated Query (LINQ). A typical LINQ query generates an enumerable result set, and you can iterate serially through this set to retrieve the data. If the data source used to generate the result set is large, running a LINQ query can take a long time. Many database management systems faced with the issue of optimizing queries address this issue by using algorithms that break down the process of identifying the data for a query into a series of tasks, and then running these tasks in parallel, combining the results when the tasks have completed to generate the completed result set. The designers of the Microsoft .NET Framework decided to provide LINQ with a similar facility, and the result is Parallel LINQ, or PLINQ. You will study PLINQ in the second part of this chapter.

However, PLINQ is not always the most appropriate technology to use for an application. If you create your own tasks manually, you need to ensure that these tasks coordinate their activities correctly. The .NET Framework class library provides methods with which you can wait for tasks to complete, and you can use these methods to coordinate tasks at a very coarse level. But, consider what happens if two tasks attempt to access and modify the same data. If both tasks run at the same time, their overlapping operations might corrupt the data. This situation can lead to bugs that are difficult to correct, primarily because of their unpredictability. Since version 1.0, the .NET Framework has provided primitives that you can use to lock data and coordinate threads, but to use them effectively required a good understanding of the way in which threads interact. The most recent versions of the .NET Framework class library include some variations to these primitives, and it provides specialized collection classes that can synchronize access to data across tasks. These classes hide much of the complexity involved in coordinating data access. You will see how to use some of these new synchronization primitives and collection classes in the third part of this chapter.

## **Implementing asynchronous methods**

## Implementing asynchronous methods

An *asynchronous* method is a method that does not block the current thread of execution. When an application invokes an asynchronous method, there is an implied contract that the method will return control to the calling environment quite quickly. The definition of *quite* is not a mathematically defined quantity, but the expectation is that if an asynchronous method performs an operation that might cause a noticeable delay to the caller, it should do so by using a background thread and make it possible for the caller to continue running on the current thread. This process sounds complicated, and indeed in earlier versions of the .NET Framework it was. However, C# now provides the *async* method modifier and the *await* operator, which delegate much of this complexity to the compiler, meaning that you no longer have to concern yourself with the intricacies of multithreading.

### Defining asynchronous methods: the problem

You have already seen how you can implement concurrent operations by using *Task* objects. To quickly recap, when you initiate a task by using the *Start* or *Run* method of the *Task* type, the Common Language Runtime (CLR) uses its own scheduling algorithm to allocate the task to a thread and set this thread running at a time convenient to the operating system, when sufficient resources are available. This level of abstraction frees your code from the requirement to understand and manage the workload of your computer. If you need to perform another operation when a specific task completes, you have the following choices:

- You can manually wait for the task to finish by using one of the *Wait* methods exposed by the *Task* type. You can then initiate the new operation, possibly by defining another task.
- You can define a continuation. A continuation simply specifies an operation to be performed when a given task completes. The .NET Framework automatically executes the continuation operation as a task that it schedules when the original task finishes.

However, although the *Task* type provides a convenient generalization of an operation, it is still often necessary to write potentially awkward code to solve



some of the common problems that developers frequently encounter when building applications that might need to execute these operations on a background thread. For example, suppose that you define the following method for a Windows 8.1 application that involves performing a series of long-running operations that must run in a serial manner and then displays a message in a *TextBox* control on the screen:

```
private void slowMethod()
{
    doFirstLongRunningOperation();
    doSecondLongRunningOperation();
    doThirdLongRunningOperation();
    message.Text = "Processing Completed";
}
private void doFirstLongRunningOperation()
{
    ...
}
private void doSecondLongRunningOperation()
{
    ...
}
private void doThirdLongRunningOperation()
{
    ...
}
```

You can make the *slowMethod* method more responsive by using a *Task* object to run the *doFirstLongRunningOperation* method, and define continuations for the same *Task* that run the *doSecondLongRunningOperation* and *doThirdLongRunningOperation* methods in turn, like this:

```
private void slowMethod()
{
    Task task = new Task(doFirstLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doSecondLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doThirdLongRunningOperation);
    task.Start();
    message.Text = "Processing Completed"; // When does this message appear?
}
private void doFirstLongRunningOperation()
{
    ...
}
```

```

    }
    private void doSecondLongRunningOperation(Task t)
    {
        ...
    }
    private void doThirdLongRunningOperation(Task t)
    {
        ...
    }
}

```

Although this refactoring seems fairly simple, there are points that you should note. Specifically, the signatures of the *doSecondLongRunningOperation* and *doThirdLongRunningOperation* methods have had to change to accommodate the requirements of continuations (the *Task* is passed as a parameter to a continuation method). More important, you need to ask yourself, “When does the message get displayed in the *TextBox* control?” The issue with this second point is that although the *Start* method initiates a *Task*, it does not wait for it to complete, so the message appears while the processing is being performed rather than when it has finished.

This is a somewhat trivial example, but the general principle is important, and there are at least two solutions. The first is to wait for the *Task* to complete before displaying the message, like this:

```

private void slowMethod()
{
    Task task = new Task(doFirstLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doSecondLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doThirdLongRunningOperation);
    task.Start();
    task.Wait();
    message.Text = "Processing Completed";
}

```

However, the call to the *Wait* method now blocks the thread executing the *slowMethod* method and obviates the purpose of using a *Task* in the first place. A better solution is to define a continuation that displays the message and arrange for it to be run only when the *doThirdLongRunningOperation* method finishes, in which case you can remove the call to the *Wait* method. You might be tempted to implement this continuation as a delegate as shown in bold in the following code (remember that a continuation is passed a *Task* object as an

argument; that is the purpose of the *t* parameter to the delegate):

```
private void slowMethod()
{
    Task task = new Task(doFirstLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doSecondLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doThirdLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith((t) => message.Text = "Processing Complete");
    task.Start();
}
```

Unfortunately, this approach yields another problem. If you try this code, you will find that the final continuation generates a *System.Exception* exception with the rather obscure message “The application called an interface that was marshaled for a different thread.” The issue is that only the user interface thread can manipulate user interface controls, and now you are attempting to write to a *TextBox* control from a different thread—the thread being used to run the *Task*. You can resolve this problem by using the *Dispatcher* object. The *Dispatcher* object is a component of the user interface infrastructure and you can send it requests to perform work on the user interface thread by calling its *Invoke* method. The *Invoke* method takes an *Action* delegate that specifies the code to run. The details of the *Dispatcher* object and the *Invoke* method are beyond the scope of this book, but the following code example shows how you might use it to display the message required by the *slowMethod* method from a continuation:

```
private void slowMethod()
{
    Task task = new Task(doFirstLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doSecondLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith(doThirdLongRunningOperation);
    task.ContinueWith((t) => this.Dispatcher.Invoke(
        CoreDispatcherPriority.Normal,
        (sender, args) => messages.Text = "Processing Complete",
        this, null));
    task.Start();
}
```

This works, but it is messy and difficult to maintain. You now have a delegate (the continuation) specifying another delegate (the code to be run by *Invoke*).

#### MORE INFO

You can find more information about the *Dispatcher* object and the *Invoke* method on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms615907.aspx>.

## Defining asynchronous methods: the solution

As you might have already guessed, the purpose of the *async* and *await* keywords in C# is so that you can define asynchronous methods without having to concern yourself with defining continuations or scheduling code to run on *Dispatcher* objects to ensure that data is manipulated on the correct thread. Very simply, the *async* modifier indicates that a method contains functionality that can be run asynchronously. The *await* operator specifies the points at which this asynchronous functionality should be performed. The following code example shows the *slowMethod* method implemented as an asynchronous method with the *async* modifier and *await* operators:

```
private async void slowMethod()
{
    await doFirstLongRunningOperation();
    await doSecondLongRunningOperation();
    await doThirdLongRunningOperation();
    messages.Text = "Processing Complete";
}
```

This method now looks remarkably similar to the original version, and that is the power of *async* and *await*. In fact, this magic is nothing more than an exercise in reworking your code by the C# compiler. When the C# compiler encounters the *await* operator in an *async* method, it effectively reformats the operand that follows this operator as a task that runs on the same thread as the *async* method. The remainder of the code is converted into a continuation that runs when the task completes, again running on the same thread. Now, because the thread that was running the *async* method was the thread running the user interface, it has direct access to the controls in the window, and so it can update them directly without routing them through the *Dispatcher* object.

Although this approach looks quite simple at first glance, it is important to keep in mind the following points and avoid some possible misconceptions:

- The *async* modifier does not signify that a method runs asynchronously on a separate thread. All it does is specify that the code in the method can be divided into one or more continuations. When these continuations run, they execute on the same thread as the original method call.
- The *await* operator specifies the point at which the C# compiler can split the code into a continuation. The *await* operator itself expects its operand to be an *awaitable* object. An *awaitable* object is a type that provides the *GetAwaiter* method, which returns an object that in turn provides methods for running code and waiting for it to complete. The C# compiler converts your code into statements that use these methods to create an appropriate continuation.

#### IMPORTANT

You can use the *await* operator only in a method marked as *async*. Outside of an *async* method, the *await* keyword is treated as an ordinary identifier (you can even create a variable called *await*, although this is not recommended).

Additionally, you cannot use the *await* operator in the *catch* or *finally* blocks of a *try/catch/finally* construct (not even in an *async* method) or in a query expression in a LINQ query. However, if you want to perform a LINQ query by using multiple concurrent tasks, you can use the PLINQ extensions described later in this chapter.

In the current implementation of the *await* operator, the *awaitable* object it expects you to specify as the operand is a *Task*. This means that you must make some modifications to the *doFirstLongRunningOperation*, *doSecondLongRunningOperation*, and *doThirdLongRunningOperation* methods. Specifically, each method must now create and run a *Task* to perform its work and return a reference to this *Task*. The following example shows an amended version of the *doFirstLongRunningOperation* method:

```
private Task doFirstLongRunningOperation()
{
    Task t = Task.Run(() => { /* original code for this method goes here */ });
    return t;
}
```

It is also worth considering whether there are opportunities to break the work

done by the *doFirstLongRunningOperation* method into a series of parallel operations. If so, you can divide the work into a set of *Tasks*, as described in [Chapter 23](#). However, which of these *Task* objects should you return as the result of the method?

```
private Task doFirstLongRunningOperation()
{
    Task first = Task.Run(() => { /* code for first operation  */});
    Task second = Task.Run(() => { code for second operation */ });
    return ...; // Do you return first or second?
}
```

If the method returns *first*, the *await* operator in the *slowMethod* will only wait for that *Task* to complete and not *second*. Similar logic applies if the method returns *second*. The solution is to define the *doFirstLongRunningOperation* method as *async*, and *await* each of the *Tasks*, as shown here:

```
private async Task doFirstLongRunningOperation()
{
    Task first = Task.Run(() => { /* code for first operation  */});
    Task second = Task.Run(() => { code for second operation */ });
    await first;
    await second;
}
```

Remember that when the compiler encounters the *await* operator, it generates code that waits for the item specified by the argument to complete, together with a continuation that runs the statements that follow. You can think of the value returned by the *async* method as a reference to the *Task* that runs this continuation (this description is not completely accurate, but it is a good enough model for the purposes of this chapter). So, the *doFirstLongRunningOperation* method creates and starts the tasks *first* and *second* running in parallel, the compiler reformats the *await* statements into code that waits for *first* to complete followed by a continuation that waits for *second* to finish, and the *async* modifier causes the compiler to return a reference to this continuation. Notice that because the compiler now determines the return value of the method, you no longer specify a return value yourself (in fact, if you try to return a value, your code will not compile).

#### NOTE

If you don't include an *await* statement in an *async* method, the method is simply a reference to a *Task* that performs the code in the body of the method. As a result, when you invoke the method, it does not actually run asynchronously. In this case, the compiler will warn you with the message "This *async* method lacks await operators and will run synchronously."

#### TIP

You can use the *async* modifier to prefix a delegate. This makes it possible for you to create delegates that incorporate asynchronous processing by using the *await* operator.

In the following exercise, you will work with the GraphDemo application from **Chapter 23** and modify it to generate the data for the graph by using an asynchronous method.

Modify the GraphDemo application to use an asynchronous method

1. Using Microsoft Visual Studio 2013, open the GraphDemo solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 24\GraphDemo folder in your Documents folder.
2. In Solution Explorer, expand the GraphDemo.xaml node and open the GraphDemo.xaml.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
3. In the *GraphWindow* class, locate the *plotButton\_Click* method.

The code in this method looks like this:

```
private void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    Random rand = new Random();
    redValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    greenValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    blueValue = (byte)rand.Next(0xFF);
    tokenSource = new CancellationTokenSource();
    CancellationToken token = tokenSource.Token;
    Stopwatch watch = Stopwatch.StartNew();
    try
    {
        generateGraphData(data, 0, pixelWidth / 2, token);
        duration.Text = string.Format("Duration (ms): {0}",
            watch.ElapsedMilliseconds);
    }
    catch { }
}
```

```

watch.ElapsedMilliseconds);
    }
    catch (OperationCanceledException oce)
    {
        duration.Text = oce.Message;
    }
    Stream pixelStream = graphBitmap.PixelBuffer.AsStream();
    pixelStream.Seek(0, SeekOrigin.Begin);
    pixelStream.Write(data, 0, data.Length);
    graphBitmap.Invalidate();
    graphImage.Source = graphBitmap;
}

```

This is a simplified version of the application from the previous chapter. It invokes the *generateGraphData* method directly from the user interface thread and does not use *Task* objects to generate the data for the graph in parallel.

#### NOTE

If you reduced the size of the *pixelWidth* and *pixelHeight* fields in the exercises in [Chapter 23](#) to save memory, do so again in this application before proceeding with the next step.

4. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
5. In the GraphDemo window, click Plot Graph. While the data is being generated, try to click Cancel.

Notice that the user interface is completely unresponsive while the graph is being generated and displayed. This is because the *plotButton\_Click* method performs all of its work synchronously, including the generation of the data for the graph.

6. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.
7. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the *GraphWindow* class, above the *generateGraphData* method, add a new private method called *generateGraphDataAsync*.

This method should take the same list of parameters as the



*generateGraphData* method, but it should return a *Task* object rather than a *void*. The method should also be marked as *async*, and it should look like this:

```
private async Task generateGraphDataAsync(byte[] data,
    int partitionStart, int partitionEnd,
    CancellationToken token)
{
}
```

#### NOTE

It is recommended practice to name asynchronous methods with the *Async* suffix.

8. In the *generateGraphDataAsync* method, add the statements shown here in bold.

```
private async Task generateGraphDataAsync(byte[] data, int partitionStart, int
partitionEnd, CancellationToken token)
{
    Task task = Task.Run(() => generateGraphData(data, partitionStart,
partitionEnd, token));
    await task;
}
```

This code creates a *Task* object that runs the *generateGraphData* method and uses the *await* operator to wait for the *Task* to complete. The task generated by the compiler as a result of the *await* operator is the value returned from the method.

9. Return to the *plotButton\_Click* method and change the definition of this method to include the *async* modifier, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
private async void plotButton_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
{
    ...
}
```

10. In the *try* block in the *plotButton\_Click* method, modify the statement that generates the data for the graph to call the *generateGraphDataAsync* method asynchronously, as shown here in bold:

```
try
{
    await generateGraphDataAsync(data, 0, pixelWidth / 2, token);
    duration.Text = string.Format("Duration (ms): {0}",
watch.ElapsedMilliseconds);
}
...
```

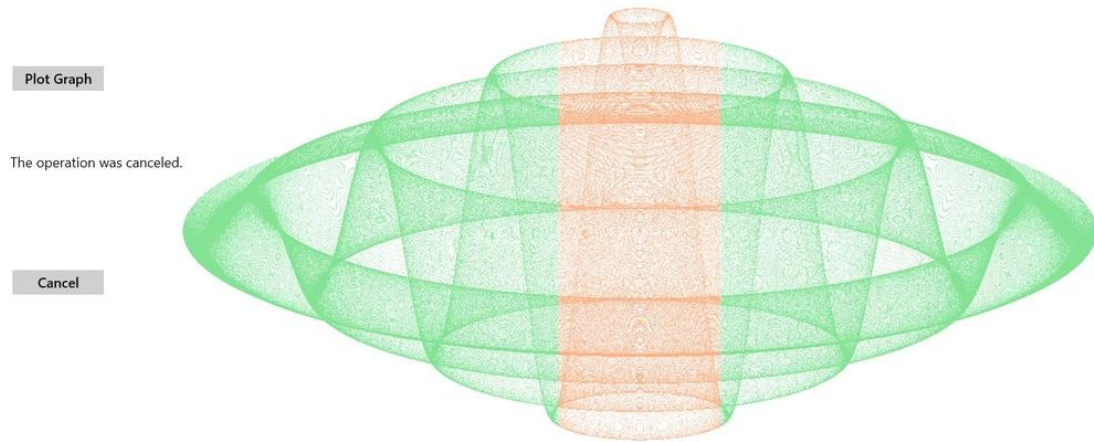
11. On the Debug menu, click Exceptions. In the Exceptions dialog box, expand Common Language Runtime Exceptions, expand System, clear the User-unhandled check box for the *System.OperationCanceledException* exception, and then click OK.

This step prevents the debugger from intercepting the *System.OperationCanceledException* exception while continuing to report any other exceptions that might occur.

12. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.
13. In the GraphDemo window, click Plot Graph and verify that the application generates the graph correctly.
14. Click Plot Graph and, while the data is being generated, click Cancel.

This time, the user interface should be responsive. Only part of the graph should be generated, and the *duration TextBlock* should display the message “The operation was cancelled.”

## Graph Demo



15. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Defining asynchronous methods that return values

So far, all the examples you have seen use a *Task* object to perform a piece of work that does not return a value. However, you also use tasks to run methods that calculate a result. To do this, you can use the generic *Task<TResult>* class, where the type parameter, *TResult*, specifies the type of the result.

You create and start a *Task<TResult>* object in a similar way to an ordinary *Task*. The primary difference is that the code you execute should return a value. For example, the method *calculateValue* shown in the code example that follows generates an integer result. To invoke this method by using a task, you create and run a *Task<int>* object. You obtain the value returned by the method by querying the *Result* property of the *Task<int>* object. If the task has not finished running the method and the result is not yet available, the *Result* property blocks the caller. This means that you don't have to perform any synchronization yourself, and you know that when the *Result* property returns a value, the task has completed its work.

```
Task<int> calculateValueTask = Task.Run(() => calculateValue(...));  
...
```

```

int calculatedData = calculateValueTask.Result; // Block until calculateValueTask
completes
...
private int calculateValue(...)
{
    int someValue;
    // Perform calculation and populate someValue
    ...
    return someValue;
}

```

The generic *Task<TResult>* type is also the basis of the mechanism for defining asynchronous methods that return values. In previous examples, you saw that you implement asynchronous *void* methods by returning a *Task*. If an asynchronous method actually generates a result, it should return a *Task<TResult>*, as shown in the following example, which creates an asynchronous version of the *calculateValue* method:

```

private async Task<int> calculateValueAsync(...)
{
    // Invoke calculateValue using a Task
    Task<int> generateResultTask = Task.Run(() => calculateValue(...));
    await generateResultTask;
    return generateResultTask.Result;
}

```

This method looks slightly confusing inasmuch as the return type is specified as *Task<int>*, but the *return* statement actually returns an *int*. Remember that when you define an *async* method, the compiler performs some refactoring of your code, and it essentially returns a reference to *Task* that runs the continuation for the statement *return generateResultTask.Result*. The type of the expression returned by this continuation is *int*, so the return type of the method is *Task<int>*.

To invoke an asynchronous method that returns a value, use the *await* operator, like this:

```

int result = await calculateValueAsync(...);

```

The *await* operator extracts the value from the *Task* returned by the *calculateValueAsync* method and in this case assigns it to the *result* variable.

## Asynchronous methods and the Windows Runtime APIs

The designers of Windows 8 and Windows 8.1 wanted to ensure that applications were as responsive as possible, so they made the decision when they implemented WinRT that any operation that might take more than 50 milliseconds to perform should be available only through an asynchronous API. You might have noticed one or two instances of this approach already in this book. For example, to display a message to a user, you can use a *MessageDialog* object. However, when you display this message, you must use the *ShowAsync* method, like this:

```
using Windows.UI.Popups;
...
MessageDialog dlg = new MessageDialog("Message to user");
await dlg.ShowAsync();
```

The *MessageDialog* object displays the message and waits for the user to click the Close button that appears as part of this dialog box. Any form of user interaction might take an indeterminate length of time (the user might have gone for lunch before clicking Close), and it is often important not to block the application or prevent it from performing other operations (such as responding to events) while the dialog box is displayed. The *MessageDialog* class does not provide a synchronous version of the *ShowAsync* method, but if you need to display a dialog box synchronously, you can simply call *dlg.ShowAsync()* without the *await* operator.

Another common example of asynchronous processing concerns the *FileOpenPicker* class, which you can see in [Chapter 5](#). The *FileOpenPicker* class displays a list of files and makes it possible for the user to select from this list. As with the *MessageDialog* class, the user might take a considerable time browsing and selecting files, so this operation should not block the application. The following example shows how to use the *FileOpenPicker* class to display the files in the user's Documents folder and wait while the user selects a single file from this list:

```
using Windows.Storage;
using Windows.Storage.Pickers;
```

```

...
FileOpenPicker fp = new FileOpenPicker();
fp.SuggestedStartLocation = PickerLocationId.DocumentsLibrary;
fp.ViewMode = PickerViewMode.List;
fp.FileTypeFilter.Add("*");
StorageFile file = await fp.PickSingleFileAsync();

```

The key statement is the line that calls the *PickSingleFileAsync* method. This is the method that displays the list of files and allows the user to navigate around the file system and select a file (the *FileOpenPicker* class also provides the *PickMultipleFilesAsync* method by which a user can select more than one file). The value returned by this method is *Task<StorageFile>*, and the *await* operator extracts the *StorageFile* object from this result. The *StorageFile* class provides an abstraction of a file held on hard disk, and using this class, you can open a file and read from it or write to it.

#### NOTE

Strictly speaking, the *PickSingleFileAsync* method returns an *IAsyncOperation<StorageFile>* object. WinRT uses its own abstraction of asynchronous operations and maps .NET Framework *Task* objects to this abstraction; the *Task* class implements the *IAsyncOperation* interface. If you are programming in C#, your code is not affected by this transformation, and you can simply use *Task* objects without concerning yourself how they get mapped to WinRT asynchronous operations.

File input/output (I/O) is another source of potentially slow operations, and the *StorageFile* class implements a raft of asynchronous methods by which these operations can be performed without impacting the responsiveness of an application. For example, in [Chapter 5](#), after the user selects a file using a *FileOpenPicker* object, the code then opens this file for reading, asynchronously:

```

StorageFile file = await fp.PickSingleFileAsync();
...
var fileStream = await file.OpenAsync(FileAccessMode.Read);

```

One final example that is directly applicable to the exercises you have seen in this and the previous chapter concerns writing to a stream. You might have noticed that although the time reported to generate the data for the graph is a few seconds, it can take up to twice that amount of time before the graph actually

appears. This is because of the way the data is written to the bitmap. The bitmap renders data held in a buffer as part of the *WriteableBitmap* object, and the *AsStream* extension method provides a *Stream* interface to this buffer. The data is written to the buffer via this stream by using the *Write* method, like this:

```
...
Stream pixelStream = graphBitmap.PixelBuffer.AsStream();
pixelStream.Seek(0, SeekOrigin.Begin);
pixelStream.Write(data, 0, data.Length);
...
```

Unless you have reduced the value of the *pixelWidth* and *pixelHeight* fields to save memory, the volume of data written to the buffer is 366 MB (12,000 8,000 4 bytes), so this *Write* operation can take a few seconds. To improve response time, you can perform this operation asynchronously by using the *WriteAsync* method:

```
await pixelStream.WriteAsync(data, 0, data.Length);
```

In general, when you build applications for Windows 8.1, you should seek to exploit asynchronicity wherever possible.

**THE IASYNCRESET DESIGN PATTERN IN EARLIER VERSIONS OF THE .NET FRAMEWORK ASYNCHRONICITY HAS BEEN LONG RECOGNIZED AS A KEY ELEMENT IN BUILDING RESPONSIVE APPLICATIONS WITH THE .NET FRAMEWORK, AND THE CONCEPT PREDATES THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TASK CLASS IN THE .NET FRAMEWORK VERSION 4.0. MICROSOFT INTRODUCED THE IASYNCRESET DESIGN PATTERN BASED ON THE ASYNCCALLBACK DELEGATE TYPE TO HANDLE THESE SITUATIONS. THE EXACT DETAILS OF HOW THIS PATTERN WORKS ARE NOT APPROPRIATE IN THIS BOOK, BUT FROM A PROGRAMMER'S PERSPECTIVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PATTERN MEANT THAT MANY TYPES IN THE .NET FRAMEWORK CLASS LIBRARY EXPOSED LONG-RUNNING OPERATIONS IN TWO WAYS: IN A SYNCHRONOUS FORM CONSISTING OF A SINGLE METHOD, AND IN AN ASYNCHRONOUS FORM USING A PAIR OF METHODS NAMED BEGINOPERATIONNAME AND ENDOPERATIONNAME, WHERE OPERATIONNAME SPECIFIED THE OPERATION BEING PERFORMED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE MEMORYSTREAM CLASS IN THE SYSTEM.IO NAMESPACE PROVIDES THE WRITE METHOD TO WRITE DATA SYNCHRONOUSLY TO A STREAM IN MEMORY, BUT IT ALSO PROVIDES THE BEGINWRITE AND ENDWRITE METHODS TO PERFORM THE SAME OPERATION ASYNCHRONOUSLY. THE BEGINWRITE METHOD INITIATES**

THE WRITE OPERATION THAT IS PERFORMED ON A NEW THREAD. THE *BEGINWRITE* METHOD EXPECTS THE PROGRAMMER TO PROVIDE A REFERENCE TO A CALLBACK METHOD THAT RUNS WHEN THE WRITE OPERATION COMPLETES; THIS REFERENCE IS IN THE FORM OF AN *ASYNCCALLBACK* DELEGATE. IN THIS METHOD, THE PROGRAMMER SHOULD IMPLEMENT ANY APPROPRIATE TIDYING UP AND CALL THE *ENDWRITE* METHOD TO SIGNIFY THAT THE OPERATION HAS COMPLETED. THE FOLLOWING CODE EXAMPLE SHOWS THIS PATTERN IN ACTION:

```
...
BYTE[] BUFFER = ...; // POPULATED WITH DATA TO WRITE TO THE
                        MEMORYSTREAM
MEMORYSTREAM MS = NEW MEMORYSTREAM();
ASYNCCALLBACK CALLBACK = NEW ASYNCCALLBACK(HANDLEWRITECOMPLETED);
MS.BEGINWRITE(BUFFER, 0, BUFFER.LENGTH, CALLBACK, MS);
...
PRIVATE VOID HANDLEWRITECOMPLETED(IASYNCRESET RESULT AR)
{
    MEMORYSTREAM MS = AR.ASYNCSTATE AS MEMORYSTREAM;
    ... // PERFORM ANY APPROPRIATE TIDYING UP
    MS.ENDWRITE(AR);
}
```

THE PARAMETER TO THE CALLBACK METHOD (*HANDLEWRITECOMPLETED*) IS AN *IASYNCRESET* OBJECT THAT CONTAINS INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE ASYNCHRONOUS OPERATION AND ANY OTHER STATE INFORMATION. YOU CAN PASS USER-DEFINED INFORMATION TO THE CALLBACK IN THIS PARAMETER; THE FINAL ARGUMENT SUPPLIED TO THE *BEGINOPERATIONNAME* METHOD IS PACKAGED INTO THIS PARAMETER. IN THIS EXAMPLE, THE CALLBACK IS PASSED A REFERENCE TO THE *MEMORYSTREAM*.

ALTHOUGH THIS SEQUENCE WORKS, IT IS A MESSY PARADIGM THAT OBSCURES THE OPERATION YOU ARE PERFORMING. THE CODE FOR THE OPERATION IS SPLIT INTO TWO METHODS, AND IT IS EASY TO LOSE THE MENTAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE METHODS IF YOU HAVE TO MAINTAIN THIS CODE. IF YOU ARE USING *TASK* OBJECTS, YOU CAN SIMPLIFY THIS MODEL BY CALLING THE STATIC *FROMASYNC* METHOD OF THE *TASKFACTORY* CLASS.

THIS METHOD TAKES THE *BEGINOPERATIONNAME* AND *ENDOPERATIONNAME* METHODS AND WRAPS THEM INTO CODE THAT IS PERFORMED BY USING A *TASK*. THERE IS NO NEED TO CREATE AN *ASYNCCALLBACK* DELEGATE, BECAUSE THIS IS GENERATED BEHIND THE SCENES BY THE *FROMASYNC* METHOD. SO, YOU CAN PERFORM THE SAME OPERATION SHOWN IN THE PREVIOUS EXAMPLE, LIKE THIS:

```
...
BYTE[] BUFFER = ...;
```



```
        MEMORYSTREAM S = NEW MEMORYSTREAM();  
TASK T = TASK<INT>.FACTORY.FROMASYNC(S.BEGINWRITE, S.ENDWRITE, BUFFER,  
        0,  
        BUFFER.LENGTH, NULL);  
        T.START();  
        AWAIT T;  
        ...
```

**THIS TECHNIQUE IS USEFUL IF YOU NEED TO ACCESS ASYNCHRONOUS FUNCTIONALITY EXPOSED BY TYPES DEVELOPED IN EARLIER VERSIONS OF THE .NET FRAMEWORK.**

## Using PLINQ to parallelize declarative data access

Data access is another area for which response time is important, especially if you are building applications that have to search through lengthy data structures. In earlier chapters, you saw how powerful LINQ is for retrieving data from an enumerable data structure, but the examples shown were inherently single-threaded. LINQ provides the set of PLINQ extensions that is based on *Tasks* and that can help you boost performance and parallelize some query operations.

PLINQ works by dividing a data set into partitions and then using tasks to retrieve the data that matches the criteria specified by the query for each partition in parallel. When the tasks have completed, the results retrieved for each partition are combined into a single enumerable result set. PLINQ is ideal for scenarios that involve data sets with large numbers of elements, or if the criteria specified for matching data involve complex, computationally expensive operations.

A primary aim of PLINQ is to be as nonintrusive as possible. If you have a lot of existing LINQ queries, you don't want to have to modify your code so that they can run with the latest build of the .NET Framework. To achieve this, the .NET Framework includes the extension method *AsParallel* that you can use with an enumerable object. The *AsParallel* method returns a *ParallelQuery* object that acts in a similar manner to the original enumerable object, except that it provides parallel implementations of many of the LINQ operators, such as *join* and *where*. These implementations of the LINQ operators are based on tasks and use various

algorithms to try to run parts of your LINQ query in parallel wherever possible. As ever in the world of parallel computing, the *AsParallel* method is not magic. You cannot guarantee that your code will speed up; it all depends on the nature of your LINQ queries and whether the tasks they are performing lend themselves to parallelization. To understand how PLINQ works and the situations in which it is useful, it helps to see some examples. The exercises in the following sections demonstrate a pair of simple scenarios.

## Using PLINQ to improve performance while iterating through a collection

The first scenario is simple. Consider a LINQ query that iterates through a collection and retrieves elements from the collection based on a processor-intensive calculation. This form of query can benefit from parallel execution as long as the calculations are independent. The elements in the collection can be divided into a number of partitions; the exact number depends on the current load of the computer and the number of CPUs available. The elements in each partition can be processed by a separate thread. When all the partitions have been processed, the results can be merged. Any collection that supports access to elements through an index, such as an array or a collection that implements the *ICollection<T>* interface, can be managed in this way.

Parallelize a LINQ query over a simple collection

1. Using Visual Studio 2013, open the PLINQ solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 24\PLINQ folder in your Documents folder.
2. In Solution Explorer, double-click Program.cs in the PLINQ project to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This is a console application. The skeleton structure of the application has already been created for you. The *Program* class contains two methods called *Test1* and *Test2* that illustrate a pair of common scenarios. The *Main* method calls each of these test methods in turn.

Both test methods have the same general structure: they create a LINQ query (you will add the code to do this later in this set of exercises), run it, and display the time taken. The code for each of these methods is almost

completely separate from the statements that actually create and run the queries.

3. Examine the *Test1* method.

This method creates a large array of integers and populates it with a set of random numbers between 0 and 200. The random number generator is seeded, so you should get the same results every time you run the application.

4. Immediately after the first *TO DO* comment in this method, add the LINQ query shown here in bold:

```
// TO DO: Create a LINQ query that retrieves all numbers that are greater than
100
var over100 = from n in numbers
               where TestIfTrue(n > 100)
               select n;
```

This LINQ query retrieves all the items in the *numbers* array that have a value greater than 100. The test  $n > 100$  is not computationally intensive enough by itself to show the benefits of parallelizing this query, so the code calls a method named *TestIfTrue*, which slows it down a little by performing a *SpinWait* operation. The *SpinWait* method causes the processor to continually execute a loop of special “no operation” instructions for a short period of time, keeping the processor busy but not actually doing any work. (This is known as *spinning*.) The *TestIfTrue* method looks like this:

```
public static bool TestIfTrue(bool expr)
{
    Thread.SpinWait(1000);
    return expr;
}
```

5. After the second *TO DO* comment in the *Test1* method, add the following code shown in bold:

```
// TO DO: Run the LINQ query, and save the results in a List<int> object
List<int> numbersOver100 = new List<int>(over100);
```

Remember that LINQ queries use deferred execution, so they do not run until you retrieve the results from them. This statement creates a *List<int>* object and populates it with the results of running the *over100* query.

6. After the third *TO DO* comment in the *Test1* method, add the following statement shown in bold:

```
// TO DO: Display the results
Console.WriteLine("There are {0} numbers over 100.", numbersOver100.Count);
```

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Note the time taken to run *Test 1* and the number of items in the array that are greater than 100.
8. Run the application several times, and take an average for the time. Verify that the number of items greater than 100 is the same each time (the application uses the same random number seed each time it runs to ensure repeatability of the tests). Return to Visual Studio when you have finished.
9. The logic that selects each item returned by the LINQ query is independent of the selection logic for all the other items, so this query is an ideal candidate for partitioning. Modify the statement that defines the LINQ query, and specify the *AsParallel* extension method to the *numbers* array, as shown here in bold:

```
var over100 = from n in numbers.AsParallel()
               where TestIfTrue(n > 100)
               select n;
```

#### NOTE

If the selection logic or calculations require access to shared data, you must synchronize the tasks that run in parallel; otherwise, the results might be unpredictable. However, synchronization can impose an overhead and might negate the benefits of parallelizing the query.

10. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging. Verify that the number of items reported by *Test1* is the same as before but that the time taken to perform the test has decreased significantly. Run the test several

times, and take an average of the duration required for the test.

If you are running on a dual-core processor (or a twin-processor computer), you should see the time reduced by 40 to 45 percent. If you have more processor cores, the decrease should be even more dramatic.

11. Close the application, and return to Visual Studio.

The preceding exercise shows the performance improvement you can attain by making a small change to a LINQ query. However, keep in mind that you will see results such as this only if the calculations performed by the query take some time. I cheated a little by spinning the processor. Without this overhead, the parallel version of the query is actually slower than the serial version. In the next exercise, you will see a LINQ query that joins two arrays in memory. This time, the exercise uses more realistic data volumes, so there is no need to slow down the query artificially.

Parallelize a LINQ query that joins two collections

1. In Solution Explorer, open the *Data.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window and locate the *CustomersInMemory* class.

This class contains a public *string* array called *Customers*. Each *string* in the *Customers* array holds the data for a single customer, with the fields separated by commas; this format is typical of data that an application might read in from a text file that uses comma-separated fields. The first field contains the customer ID, the second field contains the name of the company that the customer represents, and the remaining fields hold the address, city, country, and postal code.

2. Find the *OrdersInMemory* class.

This class is similar to the *CustomersInMemory* class except that it contains a string array called *Orders*. The first field in each string is the order number, the second field is the customer ID, and the third field is the date that the order was placed.

3. Find the *OrderInfo* class. This class contains four fields that hold the customer ID, company name, order ID, and order date for an order. You will use a LINQ query to populate a collection of *OrderInfo* objects from

the data in the *Customers* and *Orders* arrays.

4. Display the Program.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window and locate the *Test2* method in the *Program* class.

In this method, you will create a LINQ query that joins the *Customers* and *Orders* arrays over the customer ID to return a list of customers and all the orders that each customer has placed. The query will store each row of the result in an *OrderInfo* object.

5. In the *try* block in this method, add the code shown next in bold after the first *TO DO* comment:

```
// TO DO: Create a LINQ query that retrieves customers and orders from arrays
// Store each row returned in an OrderInfo object
var orderInfoQuery = from c in CustomersInMemory.Customers
                      join o in OrdersInMemory.Orders
                      on c.Split(',')[0] equals o.Split(',')[1]
                      select new OrderInfo
                      {
                          CustomerID = c.Split(',')[0],
                          CompanyName = c.Split(',')[1],
                          OrderID = Convert.ToInt32(o.Split(',')[0]),
                          OrderDate = Convert.ToDateTime(o.Split(',')[2],
                              new CultureInfo("en-US"))
                      };

```

This statement defines the LINQ query. Notice that it uses the *Split* method of the *String* class to split each string into an array of strings. The strings are split on the comma character. (The commas are stripped out.) One complication is that the dates in the array are held in United States English format, so the code that converts them into *DateTime* objects in the *OrderInfo* object specifies the United States English formatter. If you use the default formatter for your locale, the dates might not parse correctly. All in all, this query performs a significant amount of work to generate the data for each item.

6. In the *Test2* method, add the following code shown in bold after the second *TO DO* statement:

```
// TO DO: Run the LINQ query, and save the results in a List<OrderInfo> object
List<OrderInfo> orderInfo = new List<OrderInfo>(orderInfoQuery);
```

This statement runs the query and populates the *orderInfo* collection.

7. After the third *TO DO* statement, add the statement shown here in bold:

```
// TO DO: Display the results
Console.WriteLine("There are {0} orders", orderInfo.Count);
```

8. In the *Main* method, comment out the statement that calls the *Test1* method and uncomment the statement that calls the *Test2* method, as shown in the following code in bold:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    // Test1();
    Test2();
}
```

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.
10. Verify that *Test2* retrieves 830 orders, and note the duration of the test. Run the application several times to obtain an average duration and then return to Visual Studio.
11. In the *Test2* method, modify the LINQ query and add the *AsParallel* extension method to the *Customers* and *Orders* arrays, as shown here in bold:

```
var orderInfoQuery = from c in CustomersInMemory.Customers.AsParallel()
                     join o in OrdersInMemory.Orders.AsParallel()
                     on c.Split(',')[0] equals o.Split(',')[1]
                     select new OrderInfo
                     {
                         CustomerID = c.Split(',')[0],
                         CompanyName = c.Split(',')[1],
                         OrderID = Convert.ToInt32(o.Split(',')[0]),
                         OrderDate = Convert.ToDateTime(o.Split(',')[2],
                                                         New CultureInfo("en-US"))
                     };

```

### WARNING

When you join two data sources in this way, they must both be *IEnumerable* objects or *ParallelQuery* objects. This means that if you specify the *AsParallel* method for one source, you should also specify *AsParallel* for the other. If you fail to do this, your code will not run—it will stop with an error.

12. Run the application several times. Notice that the time taken for *Test2* should be significantly less than it was previously. PLINQ can make use of multiple threads to optimize join operations by fetching the data for each part of the join in parallel.
13. Close the application and return to Visual Studio.

These two simple exercises have shown you the power of the *AsParallel* extension method and PLINQ. Note that PLINQ is an evolving technology, and the internal implementation is very likely to change over time. Additionally, the volumes of data and the amount of processing you perform in a query also have a bearing on the effectiveness of using PLINQ. Therefore, you should not regard these exercises as defining fixed rules that you should always follow. Rather, they illustrate the point that you should carefully measure and assess the likely performance or other benefits of using PLINQ with your own data, in your own environment.

## Canceling a PLINQ query

Unlike ordinary LINQ queries, you can cancel a PLINQ query. To do this, you specify a *CancellationToken* object from a *CancellationTokenSource* and use the *WithCancellation* extension method of the *ParallelQuery*.

```
CancellationToken tok = ...;
...
var orderInfoQuery =
    from c in CustomersInMemory.Customers.AsParallel().WithCancellation(tok)
    join o in OrdersInMemory.Orders.AsParallel()
    on ...
```

You specify *WithCancellation* only once in a query. Cancellation applies to all



sources in the query. If the *CancellationTokenSource* object used to generate the *CancellationToken* is canceled, the query stops with an *OperationCanceledException* exception.

## Synchronizing concurrent access to data

The *Task* class supplies a powerful framework with which you can design and build applications that can take advantage of multiple CPU cores to perform tasks in parallel. However, as I alluded to in the introduction to this chapter, you need to be careful when building solutions that perform concurrent operations, especially if those operations share access to the same data.

The issue is that you have little control over how parallel operations are scheduled, or even the degree of parallelism that the operating system might provide to an application constructed by using tasks. These decisions are left as runtime considerations and depend on the workload and hardware capabilities of the computer running your application. This level of abstraction was a deliberate design decision on the part of the Microsoft development team, and it removes the need for you to understand the low-level threading and scheduling details when you build applications that require concurrent tasks. But, this abstraction comes at a cost. Although it all appears to work magically, you must make some effort to understand how your code runs; otherwise, you can end up with applications that exhibit unpredictable (and erroneous) behavior, as shown in the following example:

```
using System;
using System.Threading;
class Program
{
    private const int NUMELEMENTS = 10;
    static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        SerialTest();
    }
    static void SerialTest()
    {
        int[] data = new int[NUMELEMENTS];
        int j = 0;
        for (int i = 0; i < NUMELEMENTS; i++)
        {
```

```

        j = i;
        doAdditionalProcessing();
        data[i] = j;
        doMoreAdditionalProcessing();
    }
    for (int i = 0; i < NUMELEMENTS; i++)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Element {0} has value {1}", i, data[i]);
    }
}
static void doAdditionalProcessing()
{
    Thread.Sleep(10);
}
static void doMoreAdditionalProcessing()
{
    Thread.Sleep(10);
}
}

```

The *SerialTest* method populates an integer array with a set of values (in a rather long-winded way) and then iterates through this list, printing the index of each item in the array together with the value of the corresponding item. The *doAdditionalProcessing* and *doMoreAdditionalProcessing* methods simply simulate performing long-running operations as part of the processing that might cause the runtime to yield control of the processor. The output of the program method is shown here:

```

Element 0 has value 0
Element 1 has value 1
Element 2 has value 2
Element 3 has value 3
Element 4 has value 4
Element 5 has value 5
Element 6 has value 6
Element 7 has value 7
Element 8 has value 8
Element 9 has value 9

```

Now, consider the *ParallelTest* method shown next. This method is the same as the *SerialTest* method except that it uses the *Parallel.For* construct to populate the *data* array by running concurrent tasks. The code in the lambda expression run by each task is identical to that in the initial *for* loop in the *SerialTest*

method.

```
using System.Threading.Tasks;
...
static void ParallelTest()
{
    int[] data = new int[NUMELEMENTS];
    int j = 0;
    Parallel.For (0, NUMELEMENTS, (i) =>
    {
        j = i;
        doAdditionalProcessing();
        data[i] = j;
        doMoreAdditionalProcessing();
    });
    for (int i = 0; i < NUMELEMENTS; i++)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Element {0} has value {1}", i, data[i]);
    }
}
```

The intention is for the *ParallelTest* method to perform the same operation as the *SerialTest* method, except that it uses concurrent tasks and (hopefully) runs a little faster as a result. The problem is that it might not always work as expected. Some sample output generated by the *ParallelTest* method is shown here:

```
Element 0 has value 1
Element 1 has value 1
Element 2 has value 4
Element 3 has value 8
Element 4 has value 4
Element 5 has value 1
Element 6 has value 4
Element 7 has value 8
Element 8 has value 8
Element 9 has value 9
```

The values assigned to each item in the *data* array are not always the same as the values generated by using the *SerialTest* method. Additionally, further runs of the *ParallelTest* method can produce different sets of results.

If you examine the logic in the *Parallel.For* construct, you should see where the problem lies. The lambda expression contains the following statements:

```
j = i;
doAdditionalProcessing();
data[i] = j;
doMoreAdditionalProcessing();
```

The code looks innocuous enough. It copies the current value of the variable *i* (the index variable identifying which iteration of the loop is running) into the variable *j*, and later on it stores the value of *j* in the element of the data array indexed by *i*. If *i* contains 5, *j* is assigned the value 5, and later on the value of *j* is stored in *data[5]*. The problem is that between assigning the value to *j* and then reading it back, the code does more work; it calls the *doAdditionalProcessing* method. If this method takes a long time to execute, the runtime might suspend the thread and schedule another task. A concurrent task running another iteration of the *Parallel.For* construct might run and assign a new value to *j*. Consequently, when the original task resumes, the value of *j* it assigns to *data[5]* is not the value it stored, and the result is data corruption. More troublesome is that sometimes this code might run as expected and produce the correct results, and at other times it might not; it all depends on how busy the computer is and when the various tasks are scheduled. Consequently, these types of bugs can lie dormant during testing and then suddenly manifest in a production environment.

The variable *j* is shared by all the concurrent tasks. If a task stores a value in *j* and later reads it back, it has to ensure that no other task has modified *j* in the meantime. This requires synchronizing access to the variable across all concurrent tasks that can access it. One way in which you can achieve synchronized access is to lock data.

## Locking data

The C# language provides locking semantics through the *lock* keyword, which you can use to guarantee exclusive access to resources. You use the *lock* keyword like this:

```
object myLockObject = new object();
...
lock (myLockObject)
{
    // Code that requires exclusive access to a shared resource
}
```

```
}    ...
```

The *lock* statement attempts to obtain a mutual-exclusion lock over the specified object (you can actually use any reference type, not just *object*), and it blocks if this same object is currently locked by another thread. When the thread obtains the lock, the code in the block following the *lock* statement runs. At the end of this block, the lock is released. If another thread is blocked waiting for the lock, it can then grab the lock and continue its processing.

## Synchronization primitives for coordinating tasks

The *lock* keyword is fine for many simple scenarios, but there are situations in which you might have more complex requirements. The *System.Threading* namespace includes a number of additional synchronization primitives that you can use to address these situations. These synchronization primitives are classes designed for use with tasks; they expose locking mechanisms that restrict access to a resource while a task holds the lock. They support a variety of locking techniques that you can use to implement different styles of concurrent access, ranging from simple exclusive locks (where a single task has sole access to a resource), to semaphores (where multiple tasks can access a resource simultaneously, but in a controlled manner), to reader/writer locks that enable different tasks to share read-only access to a resource while guaranteeing exclusive access to a thread that needs to modify the resource.

The following list summarizes some of these primitives. For more information and examples, consult the documentation provided with Visual Studio 2013.

### NOTE

The .NET Framework has included a respectable set of synchronization primitives since its initial release. The following list describes only the more recent primitives included in the *System.Threading* namespace. There is some overlap between the new primitives and those provided previously. Where overlapping functionality exists, you should use the more recent alternatives because they have been designed and optimized for computers with multiple CPUs.

Detailed discussion of the theory of all the possible synchronization mechanisms available for building multithreaded applications is beyond the scope of this book. For more information about the general theory of multiple threads and synchronization, see the topic “Synchronizing Data for Multithreading” in the documentation provided with Visual Studio 2013.

- ***ManualResetEventSlim***. The *ManualResetEventSlim* class provides functionality by which one or more tasks can wait for an event.

A *ManualResetEventSlim* object can be in one of two states: *signaled* (true) and *unsignaled* (false). A task creates a *ManualResetEventSlim* object and specifies its initial state. Other tasks can wait for the *ManualResetEventSlim* object to be signaled by calling the *Wait* method. If the *ManualResetEventSlim* object is in the *unsignaled* state, the *Wait* method blocks the tasks. Another task can change the state of the *ManualResetEventSlim* object to *signaled* by calling the *Set* method. This action releases all tasks waiting on the *ManualResetEventSlim* object, which can then resume running. The *Reset* method changes the state of a *ManualResetEventSlim* object back to *unsignaled*.

- ***SemaphoreSlim***. You can use the *SemaphoreSlim* class to control access to a pool of resources.

A *SemaphoreSlim* object has an initial value (a non-negative integer) and an optional maximum value. Typically, the initial value of a *SemaphoreSlim* object is the number of resources in the pool. Tasks accessing the resources in the pool first call the *Wait* method. This method attempts to decrement the value of the *SemaphoreSlim* object, and if the result is nonzero, the thread is allowed to continue and can take a resource from the pool. When it has finished, the task should call the *Release* method on the *SemaphoreSlim* object. This action increments the value of the *Semaphore*.

If a task calls the *Wait* method and the result of decrementing the value of the *SemaphoreSlim* object would result in a negative value, the task waits until another task calls *Release*.

The *SemaphoreSlim* class also provides the *CurrentCount* property, which you can use to determine whether a *Wait* operation is likely to succeed immediately or will result in blocking.

- ***CountdownEvent***. You can think of the *CountdownEvent* class as a cross between the inverse of a semaphore and a manual reset event.

When a task creates a *CountdownEvent* object, it specifies an initial value (a

non-negative integer). One or more tasks can call the *Wait* method of the *CountdownEvent* object, and if its value is nonzero, the tasks are blocked. *Wait* does not decrement the value of the *CountdownEvent* object; instead, other tasks can call the *Signal* method to reduce the value. When the value of the *CountdownEvent* object reaches zero, all blocked tasks are signaled and can resume running.

A task can set the value of a *CountdownEvent* object back to the value specified in its constructor by using the *Reset* method, and a task can increase this value by calling the *AddCount* method. You can determine whether a call to *Wait* is likely to block by examining the *CurrentCount* property.

- ***ReaderWriterLockSlim***. The *ReaderWriterLockSlim* class is an advanced synchronization primitive that supports a single writer and multiple readers. The idea is that modifying (writing to) a resource requires exclusive access, but reading a resource does not; multiple readers can access the same resource at the same time, but not at the same time as a writer.

A task that wants to read a resource calls the *EnterReadLock* method of a *ReaderWriterLockSlim* object. This action grabs a read lock on the object. When the task has finished with the resource, it calls the *ExitReadLock* method, which releases the read lock. Multiple tasks can read the same resource at the same time, and each task obtains its own read lock.

When a task modifies the resource, it can call the *EnterWriteLock* method of the same *ReaderWriterLockSlim* object to obtain a write lock. If one or more tasks currently have a read lock for this object, the *EnterWriteLock* method blocks until they are all released. After a task has a write lock, it can then modify the resource and call the *ExitWriteLock* method to release the lock.

A *ReaderWriterLockSlim* object has only a single write lock. If another task attempts to obtain the write lock, it is blocked until the first task releases this write lock.

To ensure that writing tasks are not blocked indefinitely, as soon as a task requests the write lock, all subsequent calls to *EnterReadLock* made by other tasks are blocked until the write lock has been obtained and released.

- ***Barrier***. With the *Barrier* class, you can temporarily halt the execution of a

set of tasks at a particular point in an application and continue only when all tasks have reached this point. It is useful for synchronizing tasks that need to perform a series of concurrent operations in step with one another.

When a task creates a *Barrier* object, it specifies the number of tasks in the set that will be synchronized. You can think of this value as a task counter maintained internally inside the *Barrier* class. This value can be amended later by calling the *AddParticipant* or *RemoveParticipant* method. When a task reaches a synchronization point, it calls the *SignalAndWait* method of the *Barrier* object, which decrements the thread counter inside the *Barrier* object. If this counter is greater than zero, the task is blocked. Only when the counter reaches zero are all the tasks waiting on the *Barrier* object released, and only then can they continue running.

The *Barrier* class provides the *ParticipantCount* property, which specifies the number of tasks that it synchronizes, and the *ParticipantsRemaining* property, which indicates how many tasks need to call *SignalAndWait* before the barrier is raised and blocked tasks can continue running.

You can also specify a delegate in the *Barrier* constructor. This delegate can refer to a method that runs when all the tasks have arrived at the barrier. The *Barrier* object is passed in as a parameter to this method. The barrier is not raised and the tasks are not released until this method completes.

## Cancelling synchronization

The *ManualResetEventSlim*, *SemaphoreSlim*, *CountdownEvent*, and *Barrier* classes all support cancellation by following the cancellation model described in [Chapter 23](#). The wait operations for each of these classes can take an optional *CancellationToken* parameter, retrieved from a *CancellationTokenSource* object. If you call the *Cancel* method of the *CancellationTokenSource* object, each wait operation referencing a *CancellationToken* generated from this source is aborted with an *OperationCanceledException* exception (possibly wrapped in an *AggregateException* exception, depending on the context of the wait operation).

The following code shows how to invoke the *Wait* method of a *SemaphoreSlim* object and specify a cancellation token. If the wait operation is canceled, the *OperationCanceledException* catch handler runs.



```

CancellationTokenSource cancellationTokenSource = new CancellationTokenSource();
CancellationToken cancellationToken = cancellationTokenSource.Token;

...
// Semaphore that protects a pool of 3 resources
SemaphoreSlim semaphoreSlim = new SemaphoreSlim(3);

...
// Wait on the semaphore, and catch the OperationCanceledException if
// another thread calls Cancel on cancellationTokenSource
try
{
    semaphoreSlim.Wait(cancellationToken);
}
catch (OperationCanceledException e)
{
    ...
}

```

## The concurrent collection classes

A common requirement of many multithreaded applications is to store and retrieve data in a collection. The standard collection classes provided with the .NET Framework are not thread safe by default, although you can use the synchronization primitives described in the previous section to wrap code that adds, queries, and removes elements in a collection. However, this process is potentially error-prone and not very scalable, so the .NET Framework class library includes a small set of thread-safe collection classes and interfaces in the *System.Collections.Concurrent* namespace that are designed specifically for use with tasks. The following list briefly summarizes the key types in this namespace:

- ***ConcurrentBag<T>***. This is a general-purpose class for holding an unordered collection of items. It includes methods to insert (*Add*), remove (*TryTake*), and examine (*TryPeek*) items in the collection. These methods are thread safe. The collection is also enumerable, so you can iterate over its contents by using a *foreach* statement.
- ***ConcurrentDictionary<TKey, TValue>***. This class implements a thread-safe version of the generic *Dictionary<TKey, TValue>* collection class described in [Chapter 18](#). It provides the methods *TryAdd*, *ContainsKey*, *TryGetValue*, *TryRemove*, and *TryUpdate*, which you can use to add, query, remove, and modify items in the dictionary.

- ***ConcurrentQueue<T>***. This class provides a thread-safe version of the generic *Queue<T>* class described in **Chapter 18**. It includes the methods *Enqueue*, *TryDequeue*, and *TryPeek*, which you can use to add, remove, and query items in the queue.
- ***ConcurrentStack<T>***. This is a thread-safe implementation of the generic *Stack<T>* class, also described in **Chapter 18**. It provides methods such as *Push*, *TryPop*, and *TryPeek*, which you can use to push, pop, and query items on the stack.

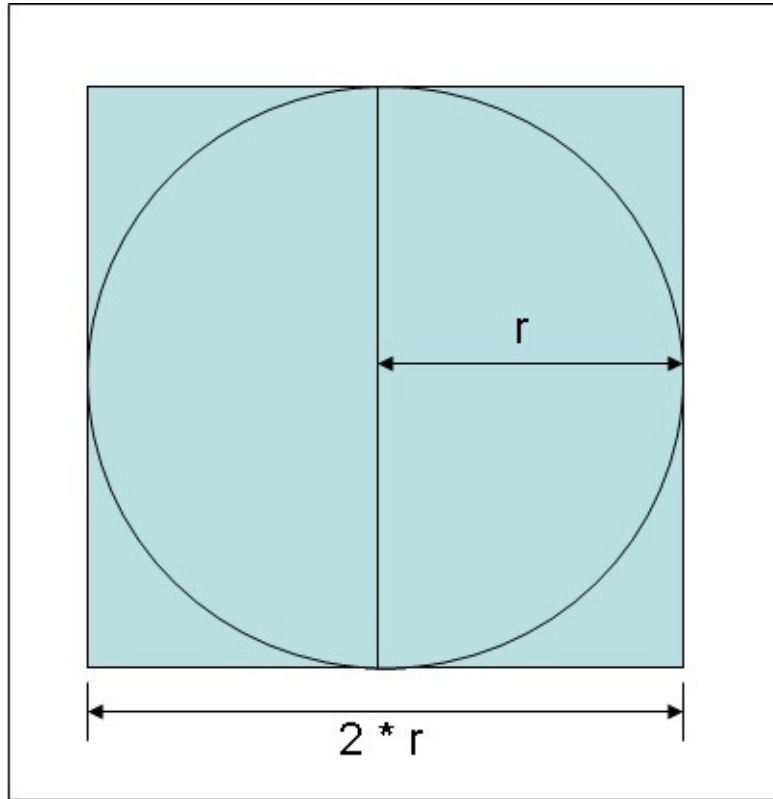
#### NOTE

Adding thread safety to the methods in a collection class imposes additional runtime overhead, so these classes are not as fast as the regular collection classes. You need to keep this fact in mind when deciding whether to parallelize a set of operations that require access to a shared collection.

## Using a concurrent collection and a lock to implement thread-safe data access

In the following set of exercises, you will implement an application that calculates pi by using a geometric approximation. Initially, you will perform the calculation in a single-threaded manner, and then you will change the code to perform the calculation by using parallel tasks. In the process, you will uncover some data synchronization issues that you need to address and that you will solve by using a concurrent collection class and a lock to ensure that the tasks coordinate their activities correctly.

The algorithm that you will implement calculates pi based on some simple mathematics and statistical sampling. If you draw a circle of radius  $r$  and draw a square with sides that touch the circle, the sides of the square are  $2 * r$  in length, as shown in the image following.



You can calculate the area of the square,  $S$ , like this  $S = (2 * r) (2 r)$

or

$$S = 4 r r$$

The area of the circle,  $C$ , is calculated as follows:  $C = \pi r r$

Rearranging these formulas, you can see that  $r * r = C / \pi$

and

$$r * r = S / 4$$

Therefore,

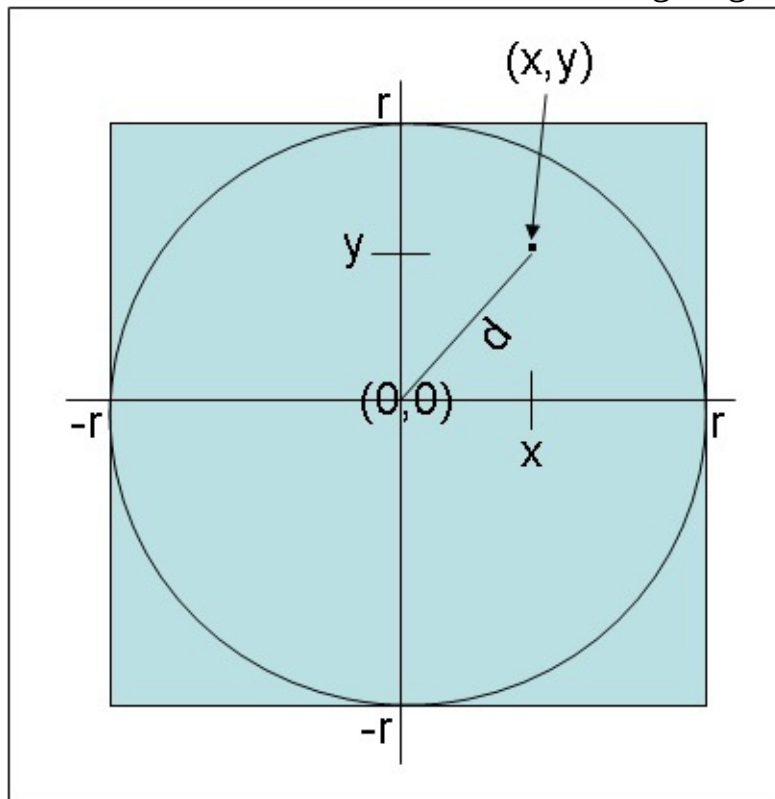
$$S / 4 = C / \pi$$

and rearranging this formula to calculate  $\pi$  you get this:  $\pi = 4 * C / S$

The trick is to determine the value of the ratio of the area of the circle,  $C$ , with respect to the area of the square,  $S$ . This is where the statistical sampling comes in. You can generate a set of random points that lie within the square and count how many of these points also fall within the circle. If you have generated a sufficiently large and random sample, the ratio of points that lie within the circle

to the points that lie within the square (and also in the circle) approximates the ratio of the areas of the two shapes,  $C/S$ . All you have to do is count them.

How do you determine whether a point lies within the circle? To help visualize the solution, draw the square on a piece of graph paper with the center of the square at the origin, point  $(0,0)$ . You can then generate pairs of values, or coordinates, that lie within the range  $(-r, -r)$  to  $(+r, +r)$ . You can determine whether any set of coordinates  $(x, y)$  lie within the circle by applying the Pythagorean theorem to determine the distance  $d$  of these coordinates from the origin. You can calculate  $d$  as the square root of  $((x * x) + (y * y))$ . If  $d$  is less than or equal to  $r$ , the radius of the circle, the coordinates  $(x, y)$  specify a point within the circle, as shown in the following diagram:



You can simplify matters further by generating only coordinates that lie in the upper-right quadrant of the graph so that you only have to generate pairs of random numbers between 0 and  $r$ . This is the approach you will take in the exercises.

#### NOTE

The exercises in this chapter are intended to run on a computer with a multicore processor. If

you have only a single-core CPU, you will not observe the same effects. Also, you should not start any additional programs or services between exercises, because these might affect the results you see.

## Calculate pi by using a single thread

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the CalculatePI solution, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 24\CalculatePI folder in your Documents folder.
3. In Solution Explorer, in the CalculatePI project, double-click Program.cs to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window.

This is a console application. The skeleton structure of the application has already been created for you.

4. Scroll to the bottom of the file and examine the *Main* method. It looks like this:

```
static void Main(string[] args)
{
    double pi = SerialPI();
    Console.WriteLine("Geometric approximation of PI calculated serially:
{0}", pi);
    Console.WriteLine();
    // pi = ParallelPI();
    // Console.WriteLine("Geometric approximation of PI calculated in
parallel: {0}",
pi);
}
```

This code calls the *SerialPI* method, which will calculate pi by using the geometric algorithm described before this exercise. The value is returned as a *double* and displayed. The code that is currently commented out calls the *ParallelPI* method, which will perform the same calculation but by using concurrent tasks. The result displayed should be exactly the same as that returned by the *SerialPI* method.

## 5. Examine the *SerialPI* method.

```
static double SerialPI()
{
    List<double> pointsList = new List<double>();
    Random random = new Random(SEED);
    int numPointsInCircle = 0;
    Stopwatch timer = new Stopwatch();
    timer.Start();
    try
    {
        // TO DO: Implement the geometric approximation of PI
        return 0;
    }
    finally
    {
        long milliseconds = timer.ElapsedMilliseconds;
        Console.WriteLine("SerialPI complete: Duration: {0} ms",
milliseconds);
        Console.WriteLine(
            "Points in pointsList: {0}. Points within circle: {1}",
            pointsList.Count, numPointsInCircle);
    }
}
```

This method generates a large set of coordinates and calculates the distances of each set of coordinates from the origin. The size of the set is specified by the constant *NUMPOINTS* at the top of the *Program* class. The bigger this value is, the greater the set of coordinates and the more accurate the value of pi calculated by this method. If you have sufficient memory, you can increase the value of *NUMPOINTS*. Similarly, if you find that the application throws *OutOfMemoryException* exceptions when you run it, you can reduce this value.

You store the distance of each point from the origin in the *pointsList* *List<double>* collection. The data for the coordinates is generated by using the *random* variable. This is a *Random* object, seeded with a constant to generate the same set of random numbers each time you run the program. (This helps you determine that it is running correctly.) You can change the *SEED* constant at the top of the *Program* class if you want to seed the random number generator with a different value.

You use the *numPointsInCircle* variable to count the number of points in the *pointsList* collection that lie within the bounds of the circle. The radius of the circle is specified by the *RADIUS* constant at the top of the *Program* class.

To help you compare performance between this method and the *ParallelPI* method, the code creates a *Stopwatch* variable called *timer* and starts it running. The *finally* block determines how long the calculation took and displays the result. For reasons that will be described later, the *finally* block also displays the number of items in the *pointsList* collection and the number of points that it found that lie within the circle.

You will add the code that actually performs the calculation to the *try* block in the next few steps.

6. In the *try* block, delete the comment and remove the *return* statement. (This statement was provided only to ensure that the code compiles.) Add the *for* block and statements shown in bold in the following code to the *try* block:

```
try
{
    for (int points = 0; points < NUMPOINTS; points++)
    {
        int xCoord = random.Next(RADIUS);
        int yCoord = random.Next(RADIUS);
        double distanceFromOrigin = Math.Sqrt(xCoord * xCoord + yCoord
yCoord);
        pointsList.Add(distanceFromOrigin);
        doAdditionalProcessing();
    }
}
```

This block of code generates a pair of coordinate values that lie in the range 0 to *RADIUS*, and it stores them in the *xCoord* and *yCoord* variables. The code then employs Pythagoras' theorem to calculate the distance of these coordinates from the origin and adds the result to the *pointsList* collection.

#### NOTE

Although there is a little bit of computational work performed by this block of code, in a real-world scientific application you are likely to include far more complex calculations that will keep the processor occupied for longer. To simulate this situation, this block of code calls another method, *doAdditionalProcessing*. All this method does is occupy a number of CPU cycles as shown in the following code sample. I opted to follow this approach to better demonstrate the data synchronization requirements of multiple tasks rather than have you write an application that performs a highly complex calculation such as a fast Fourier transform (FFT) to keep the CPU busy:

```
private static void doAdditionalProcessing()
{
    Thread.SpinWait(SPINWAIT);
}
```

*SPINWAIT* is another constant defined at the top of the *Program* class.

7. In the *SerialPI* method, in the *try* block, after the *for* block, add the *foreach* statement shown in bold in the following example.

```
try
{
    for (int points = 0; points < NUMPOINTS; points++)
    {
        ...
    }
    foreach (double datum in pointsList)
    {
        if (datum <= RADIUS)
        {
            numPointsInCircle++;
        }
    }
}
```

This code iterates through the *pointsList* collection and examines each value in turn. If the value is less than or equal to the radius of the circle, it increments the *numPointsInCircle* variable. At the end of this loop, *numPointsInCircle* should contain the total number of coordinates that were found to lie within the bounds of the circle.

8. Add the following statements shown in bold to the *try* block, after the



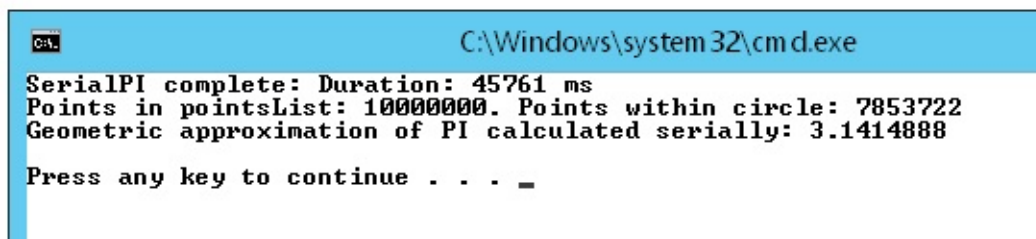
*foreach* statement:

```
try
{
    for (int points = 0; points < NUMPOINTS; points++)
    {
        ...
    }
    foreach (double datum in pointsList)
    {
        ...
    }
    double pi = 4.0 * numPointsInCircle / NUMPOINTS;
    return pi;
}
```

The first statement calculates pi based on the ratio of the number of points that lie within the circle to the total number of points, using the formula described earlier. The value is returned as the result of the method.

9. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program runs and displays its approximation of pi, as shown in the following image. (It took just over 46 seconds on my computer, so be prepared to wait for a little while.) The time taken to calculate the result also appears. (You can ignore the results from the *ParallelPI* method because you have not written the code for this method yet.)



```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
SerialPI complete: Duration: 45761 ms
Points in pointsList: 10000000. Points within circle: 7853722
Geometric approximation of PI calculated serially: 3.1414888
Press any key to continue . . . _
```

#### NOTE

Apart from the timing, your results should be the same unless you have changed the *NUMPOINTS*, *RADIUS*, or *SEED* constants.

- Close the console window, and return to Visual Studio.

In the *SerialPI* method, the code in the *for* loop that generates the points and calculates their distance from the origin is an obvious area that can be parallelized. This is what you will do in the next exercise.

Calculate pi by using parallel tasks

1. In Solution Explorer, double-click Program.cs to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window if it is not already open.
2. Locate the *ParallelPI* method. It contains exactly the same code as the initial version of the *SerialPI* method before you added the code to the *try* block to calculate pi.
3. In the *try* block, delete the comment and remove the *return* statement. Add the *Parallel.For* statement shown here in bold to the *try* block:

```
try
{
    Parallel.For (0, NUMPOINTS, (x) =>
    {
        int xCoord = random.Next(RADIUS);
        int yCoord = random.Next(RADIUS);
        double distanceFromOrigin = Math.Sqrt(xCoord * xCoord + yCoord
yCoord);
        pointsList.Add(distanceFromOrigin);
        doAdditionalProcessing();
    });
}
```

This construct is the parallel analog of the code in the *for* loop in the *SerialPI* method. The body of the original *for* loop is wrapped in a lambda expression. Remember that each iteration of the loop is performed by using a task, and tasks can run in parallel. The degree of parallelism depends on the number of processor cores and other resources available on your computer.

4. Add the code shown in bold that follows to the *try* block after the *Parallel.For* statement. This code is exactly the same as the corresponding statements in the *SerialPI* method.

```
try
```

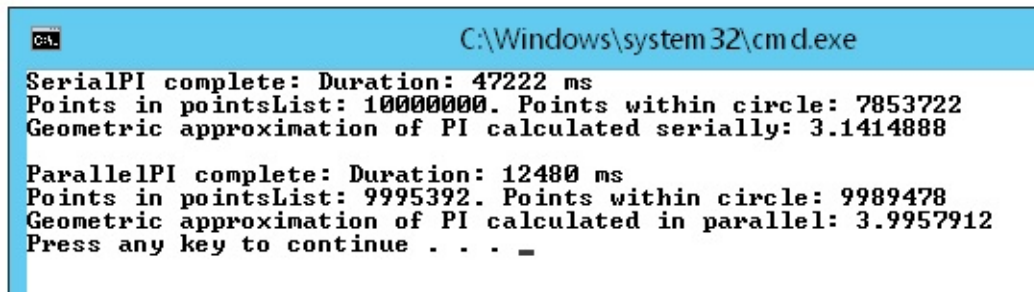
```

{
    Parallel.For (...
    {
        ...
    });
    foreach (double datum in pointsList)
    {
        if (datum <= RADIUS)
        {
            numPointsInCircle++;
        }
    }
    double pi = 4.0 * numPointsInCircle / NUMPOINTS;
    return pi;
}

```

5. In the *Main* method near the end of the *Program.cs* file, uncomment the code that calls the *ParallelPI* method and the *Console.WriteLine* statement that displays the results.
6. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program runs. The following image shows the typical output:



```

C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
SerialPI complete: Duration: 47222 ms
Points in pointsList: 10000000. Points within circle: 7853722
Geometric approximation of PI calculated serially: 3.1414888

ParallelPI complete: Duration: 12480 ms
Points in pointsList: 9995392. Points within circle: 9989478
Geometric approximation of PI calculated in parallel: 3.9957912
Press any key to continue . . . _

```

The value calculated by the *SerialPI* method should be exactly the same as before (the timing might be slightly different). However, although it was calculated somewhat more quickly, the result of the *ParallelPI* method looks a little suspect. The random number generator is seeded with the same value as that used by the *SerialPI* method, so it should produce the same sequence of random numbers with the same result and the same number of points within the circle. Another curious point is that the *pointsList* collection in the *ParallelPI* method seems to contain fewer points than the same collection in the *SerialPI* method.

#### NOTE

If the *pointsList* collection actually contains the expected number of items, run the application again. You should find that it contains fewer items than expected in most (but not necessarily all) runs.

- Close the console window, and return to Visual Studio.

So, what went wrong with the parallel calculation? A good place to start is the number of items in the *pointsList* collection. This collection is a generic *List<double>* object. However, this type is not thread-safe. The code in the *Parallel.For* statement calls the *Add* method to append a value to the collection, but remember that this code is being executed by tasks running as concurrent threads. Consequently, given the number of items being added to the collection, it is highly probable that some of the calls to *Add* will interfere with one another and cause some corruption. A solution is to use one of the collections from the *System.Collections.Concurrent* namespace because these collections are thread-safe. The generic *ConcurrentBag<T>* class in this namespace is probably the most suitable collection to use for this example.

Use a thread-safe collection

1. In Solution Explorer, double-click *Program.cs* to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window if it is not already open.
2. Add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using System.Collections.Concurrent;
```

3. Locate the *ParallelPI* method. At the start of this method, replace the statement that instantiates the *List<double>* collection with code that creates a *ConcurrentBag<double>* collection, as shown in bold in the following code example:

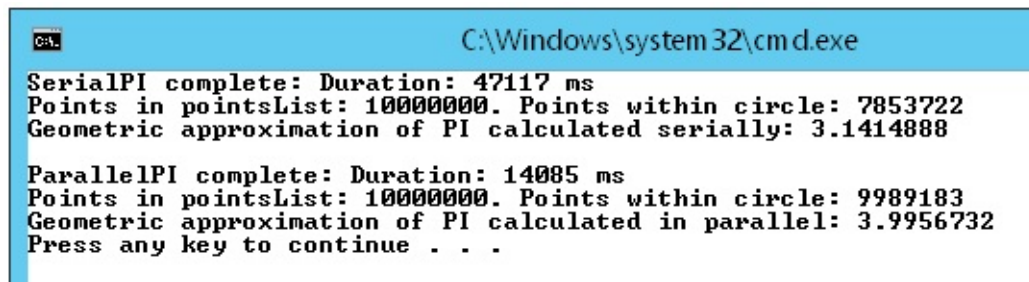
```
static double ParallelPI()
{
    ConcurrentBag<double> pointsList = new ConcurrentBag <double>();
    Random random = ...;
    ...
}
```

Notice that you cannot specify a default capacity for this class, so the constructor does not take a parameter.

You do not need to change any other code in this method; you add an item to a *ConcurrentBag*<T> collection by using the *Add* method, which is the same mechanism that you use to add an item to a *List*<T> collection.

4. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The program runs and displays its approximation of pi by using the *SerialPI* and *ParallelPI* methods. The following image shows the typical output.



```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe
SerialPI complete: Duration: 47117 ms
Points in pointsList: 10000000. Points within circle: 7853722
Geometric approximation of PI calculated serially: 3.1414888

ParallelPI complete: Duration: 14085 ms
Points in pointsList: 10000000. Points within circle: 9989183
Geometric approximation of PI calculated in parallel: 3.9956732
Press any key to continue . . .
```

This time, the *pointsList* collection in the *ParallelPI* method contains the correct number of points, but the number of points within the circle still appears to be very high; it should be the same as that reported by the *SerialPI* method.

You should also note that the time taken by the *ParallelPI* method has increased compared to the previous exercise. This is because the methods in the *ConcurrentBag*<T> class have to lock and unlock data to guarantee thread safety, and this process adds to the overhead of calling these methods. Keep this point in mind when you're considering whether it is appropriate to parallelize an operation.

5. Close the console window, and return to Visual Studio.

You currently have the correct number of points in the *pointsList* collection, but the value recorded for each of these points is now questionable. The code in the *Parallel.For* construct calls the *Next* method of a *Random* object, but like the methods in the generic *List*<T> class, this method is not thread-safe. Sadly, there is no concurrent version of the *Random* class, so you must resort to using an alternative technique to serialize calls to the *Next* method. Because each

invocation is relatively brief, it makes sense to use a simple lock to guard calls to this method.

Use a lock to serialize method calls

1. In Solution Explorer, double-click Program.cs to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window if it is not already open.
2. Locate the *ParallelPI* method. Modify the code in the lambda expression in the *Parallel.For* statement to protect the calls to *random.Next* by using a lock statement. Specify the *pointsList* collection as the subject of the lock, as shown here in bold:

```
static double ParallelPI()
{
    ...
    Parallel.For(0, NUMPOINTS, (x) =>
    {
        int xCoord;
        int yCoord;
        lock(pointsList)
        {
            xCoord = random.Next(RADIUS);
            yCoord = random.Next(RADIUS);
        }
        double distanceFromOrigin = Math.Sqrt(xCoord * xCoord + yCoord
yCoord);
        pointsList.Add(distanceFromOrigin);
        doAdditionalProcessing();
    });
    ...
}
```

Notice that the *xCoord* and *yCoord* variables are declared outside of the lock statement. This is because the lock statement defines its own scope, and any variables defined within the block specifying the scope of the lock statement disappear when the construct exits.

3. On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

This time, the values of pi calculated by the *SerialPI* and *ParallelPI* methods are the same. The only difference is that the *ParallelPI* method runs more quickly.

```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe

SerialPI complete: Duration: 47281 ms
Points in pointsList: 10000000. Points within circle: 7853722
Geometric approximation of PI calculated serially: 3.1414888

ParallelPI complete: Duration: 14284 ms
Points in pointsList: 10000000. Points within circle: 7853722
Geometric approximation of PI calculated in parallel: 3.1414888
Press any key to continue . . . _
```

4. Close the console window, and return to Visual Studio.

## Summary

In this chapter, you saw how to define asynchronous methods by using the *async* modifier and the *await* operator. Asynchronous methods are based on tasks, and the *await* operator specifies the points at which a task can be used to perform asynchronous processing.

You also learned a little about PLINQ and how you can use the *AsParallel* extension method to parallelize some LINQ queries. However, PLINQ is a big subject in its own right, and this chapter has only shown you how to get started. For more information, see the topic “Parallel LINQ (PLINQ)” in the documentation provided with Visual Studio.

This chapter also showed you how to synchronize data access in concurrent tasks by using the synchronization primitives provided for use with tasks. You saw how to use the concurrent collection classes to maintain collections of data in a thread-safe manner.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 25](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

| To           | Do this  |
|--------------|--|
| Implement an | Define the method with the <i>async</i> modifier and change the type of the method |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Implement an asynchronous method   | <p>Define the method with the <i>async</i> modifier and change the type of the method to return a <i>Task</i> (or a <i>void</i>). In the body of the method, use the <i>await</i> operator to specify points at which asynchronous processing can be performed. For example:</p> <pre>private async Task&lt;int&gt; calculateValueAsync(...) {     // Invoke calculateValue using a Task     Task&lt;int&gt; generateResultTask =         Task.Run(() =&gt; calculateValue(...));     await generateResultTask;     return generateResultTask.Result; }</pre> |
| Parallelize a LINQ query   | <p>Specify the <i>AsParallel</i> extension method with the data source in the query. For example:</p> <pre>var over100 = from n in numbers.AsParallel()               where ...               select n;</pre>   |
| Enable cancellation in a PLINQ query   | <p>Use the <i>WithCancellation</i> method of the <i>ParallelQuery</i> class in the PLINQ query, and specify a cancellation token. For example:</p> <pre>CancellationToken tok = ...; ... var orderInfoQuery = from c in     CustomersInMemory.Customers.AsParallel().     WithCancellation(tok)     join o in OrdersInMemory.Orders.AsParallel()     on ...</pre>   |
| Synchronize one or more tasks to implement thread-safe exclusive access to shared data | <p>Use the <i>lock</i> statement to guarantee exclusive access to the data. For example:</p> <pre>object myLockObject = new object(); ... lock (myLockObject) {     // Code that requires exclusive access to a shared     resource     ... }</pre>   |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| Synchronize threads, and make them wait for an event                 | <p>Use a <i>ManualResetEventSlim</i> object to synchronize an indeterminate number of threads.</p> <p>Use a <i>CountdownEvent</i> object to wait for an event to be signaled a specified number of times.</p> <p>Use a <i>Barrier</i> object to coordinate a specified number of threads and synchronize them at a particular point in an operation.</p>   |
| Synchronize access to a shared pool of resources                     | <p>Use a <i>SemaphoreSlim</i> object. Specify the number of items in the pool in the constructor. Call the <i>Wait</i> method prior to accessing a resource in the shared pool. Call the <i>Release</i> method when you have finished with the resource. For example:</p> <pre> SemaphoreSlim semaphore = new SemaphoreSlim(3); ... semaphore.Wait(); // Access a resource from the pool ... semaphore.Release(); </pre>   |
| Provide exclusive write access to a resource, but shared read access | <p>Use a <i>ReaderWriterLockSlim</i> object. Prior to reading the shared resource, call the <i>EnterReadLock</i> method. Call the <i>ExitReadLock</i> method when you have finished. Before writing to the shared resource, call the <i>EnterWriteLock</i> method. Call the <i>ExitWriteLock</i> method when you have completed the write operation. For example:</p> <pre> ReaderWriterLockSlim readerWriterLock = new ReaderWriterLockSlim(); Task readerTask = Task.Factory.StartNew(() =&gt; {     readerWriterLock.EnterReadLock();     // Read shared resource     readerWriterLock.ExitReadLock(); }); Task writerTask = Task.Factory.StartNew(() =&gt; {     readerWriterLock.EnterWriteLock();     // Write to shared resource     readerWriterLock.ExitWriteLock(); }); </pre> |
| Cancel a blocking wait operation                                     | <p>Create a cancellation token from a <i>CancellationTokenSource</i> object, and specify this token as a parameter to the <i>wait</i> operation. To cancel the <i>wait</i> operation, call the <i>Cancel</i> method of the <i>CancellationTokenSource</i> object. For</p>  |

operation, call the *Cancel* method of the *CancellationTokenSource* object. For example:

```
CancellationTokenSource cancellationTokenSource
= new
CancellationTokenSource();
CancellationToken cancellationToken =
cancellationTokenSource.Token;
...
// Semaphore that protects a pool of 3 resources
SemaphoreSlim semaphoreSlim = new
SemaphoreSlim(3);
...
// Wait on the semaphore, and throw an
OperationCanceledException if
// another thread calls Cancel on
cancellationTokenSource
semaphoreSlim.Wait(cancellationToken);
```

# Chapter 25. Implementing the user interface for a Windows Store app

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After completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- What is a Windows Store app?
- Implementing a scalable user interface
- Applying styles to a UI

Microsoft Windows Store apps are based on a new paradigm for applications that is arguably the biggest change in Windows client application development since the advent of the Microsoft .NET Framework just after the turn of the millennium. The continuously connected, touch-driven interface of Windows 8.1 together with the use of Windows contracts for interacting with other apps, the support for embedded sensors, and an updated app security and lifecycle model changes the way that users and apps work together. Using Microsoft Visual Studio 2013, developers can easily design and implement apps that can take advantage of the features of the Windows 8.1 platform.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief description of this new paradigm and help you to get started using Visual Studio 2013 to build apps that operate in this environment. In this chapter, you will learn about some of the new features and tools included with Visual Studio 2013 for building Windows Store apps, and you will start to build an app that conforms to the Windows 8.1 look and feel. You will concentrate on learning how to implement a user interface (UI) that scales and adapts to different device resolutions and form factors, and how to apply styling to give the app a distinctive look and feel.

#### NOTE

There is not enough space in a book such as this to provide a comprehensive treatise on building Windows Store apps. Rather, these final chapters concentrate on the basic principles of building an interactive app that uses the Windows 8.1 UI. For detailed information on writing Windows Store apps, visit the “Developing Windows Store apps” page on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/xaml/BR229566>.

## What is a Windows Store app?

Windows Store apps are graphical apps that have a distinctive look and feel, based on a few simple principles that you will learn about in this chapter and in [Chapter 26](#) and [Chapter 27](#). They are highly interactive, placing the user at the center of their operations. Microsoft has invested a significant amount of time (and money) in studies that examined how users like to work with apps and the most effective ways of displaying data and interacting with that data. The designers at Microsoft have applied this knowledge to develop the model that Windows Store apps should follow.

When a Windows Store app runs, it typically occupies the full screen, although Windows Store apps can operate in different display modes that you will learn about in this chapter. They are *chromeless*, meaning they do not have borders, drop-down menus, pop-up windows, or many of the other user interface features that can serve as a distraction to users. Instead, you design a Windows Store app to be clean and focused on helping the user to perform a specific set of tasks. Additionally, Microsoft has performed investigations into areas such as readability, and the company has documented guidelines illustrating the standardized use of fonts, weights, spacing, and positioning for text.

#### NOTE

You can find lots of information about the design features of Windows Store apps online on the Microsoft website. Specifically, the webpage “UX Patterns,” available at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/hh770552.aspx>, provides guidance on planning the features that a Windows Store app should implement and how to design the app to provide the optimal user experience.

Many modern handheld and tablet devices make it possible for users to interact

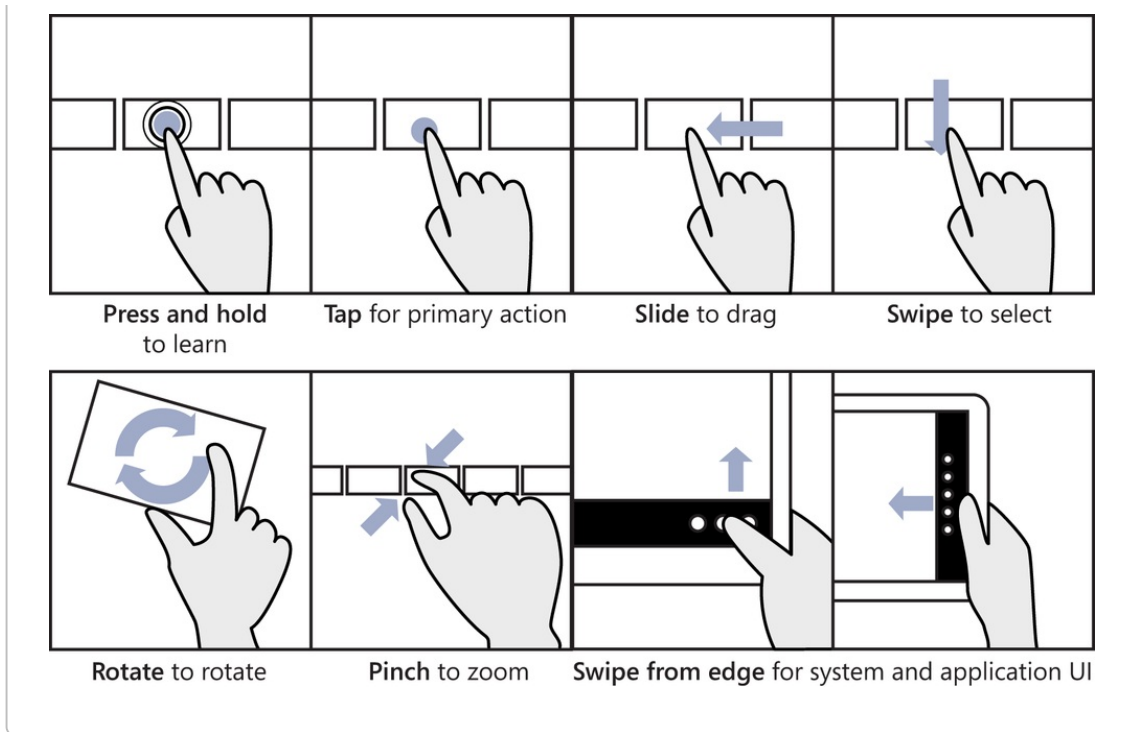
with apps by using touch, and you should design your Windows Store apps based on this style of user experience (UX). Windows 8.1 includes an extensive collection of touch-based controls that also work with the mouse and keyboard if the user does not have a touch-sensitive device. You don't need to separate the touch and mouse features in your apps; simply design for touch and users can still operate by using the mouse and keyboard if they prefer or if they are running on a device that does not support this style of interaction.

Subtle, fluid, and discrete animations are also an important aspect of the entire UX. The way in which the graphical user interface (GUI) responds to gestures to provide feedback to the user can greatly enhance the professional feel of your apps. The Windows Store app templates included with Visual Studio 2013 include an animation library that you can use in your apps to standardize this feedback and blend in seamlessly with the operating system and software that Microsoft provides.

#### NOTE

The term *gesture* refers to the manual touch-oriented operations that a user can perform. For example, a user can tap an item with a finger, and this gesture typically responds in the same way that you would expect a mouse-click to behave. However, gestures can be far more expressive than the simple operations that can be captured by using a mouse. For example, the “rotate” gesture involves the user placing two fingers on the screen and “drawing” the arc of a circle with them; in a typical Windows 8.1 app, this gesture should cause the UI to rotate the selected object in the direction indicated by the movement of the fingers. Other gestures include “pinch” to zoom in on an item to display more detail, “press and hold” to reveal more information about an item (similar to performing a right-mouse click), and “slide” to select and drag an item across the screen.

The Windows 8.1 user interface employs a number of its own specific gestures for interacting with the operating system. For example, you can “swipe” the currently running app to the bottom of the screen to terminate it, or you can swipe from the left or right edge of the display to view the Windows system icons.



Windows 8.1 is intended to run on a wide range of devices, from desktop computers and laptops through to tablet computers and small handheld devices and smartphones. An important concept in building Windows Store apps is that you need to construct your software so that it adapts to the environment in which it is running, scaling automatically to the screen size and orientation of the device. This approach opens up your software to an increasingly broad market. Additionally, many modern devices can also detect their orientation and the speed at which the user changes this orientation through the use of in-built sensors and accelerometers. Windows Store apps can adapt their layout as the user tilts or rotates a device, making it possible for the user to work in a mode that is most comfortable for that individual. You should also understand that mobility is a key requirement for many modern apps, and with Windows Store apps, users can roam; their data can migrate through the cloud to whatever device they happen to be running your app on at a particular moment.

Windows Store apps can also support a number of features that facilitate interactions with other apps as well as the Windows 8.1 operating system. These features are based on a standardized mechanism known as a *contract*. A contract defines a Windows 8.1 interface through which an app can implement or consume an operating system–defined feature, such as the ability to share data or

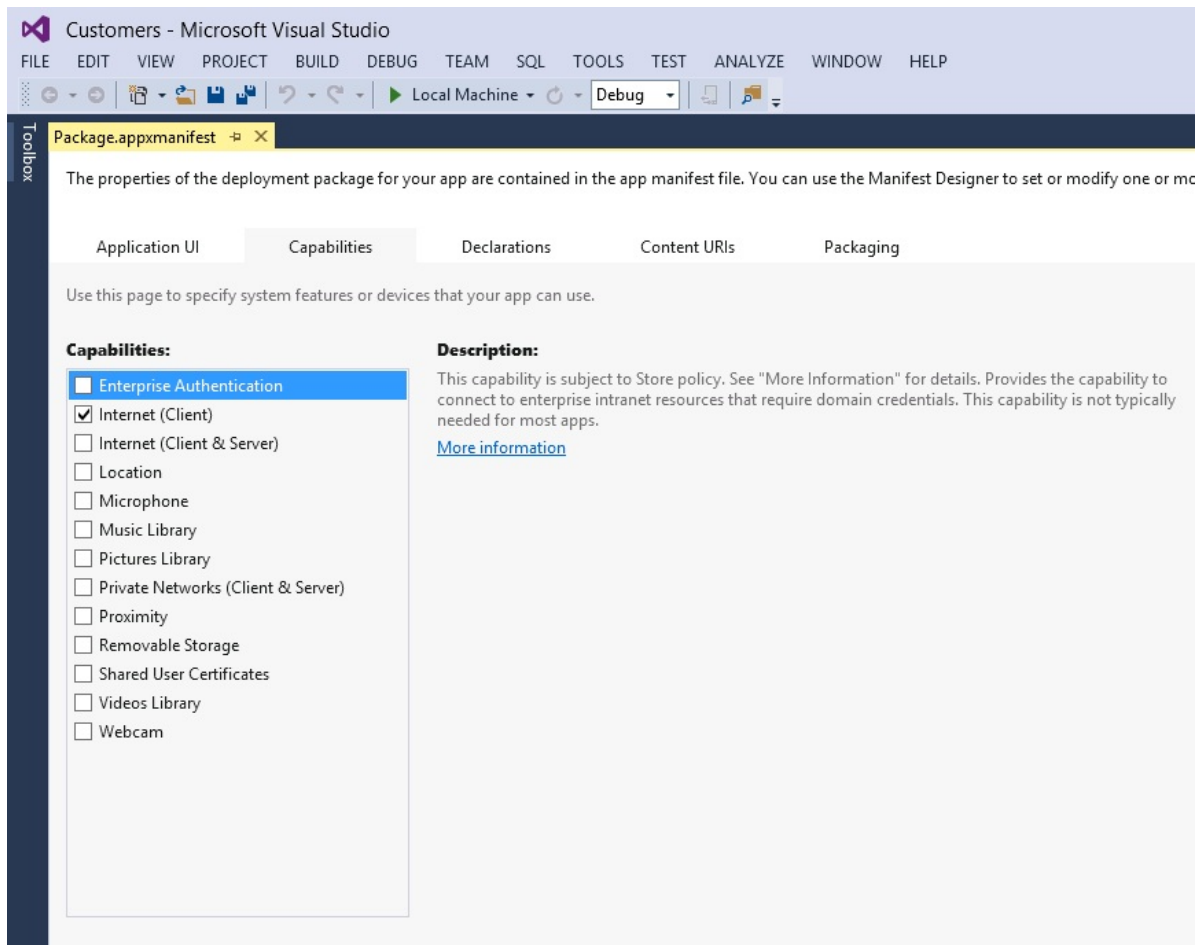
support search requests. Using contracts, Windows Store apps can communicate with one another without introducing any app-specific dependencies. You will learn more about Windows 8.1 contracts in [Chapter 26](#).

The lifetime of Windows Store app is somewhat different from that of a traditional desktop app. At any given point in time, Windows 8.1 just runs the app that occupies the area of focus on the screen, and if you switch to a different app, that app becomes the focus and moves to the foreground, and the original app is suspended. Windows 8.1 might actually decide to close a suspended app if it determines that it needs to release system resources such as memory. When the app next runs, it should be able to resume from where it left off. This means that you need to be prepared to manage app state information in your code, save it to hard disk, and restore it at the appropriate juncture.

#### NOTE

You can find more information about how to manage the lifecycle of a Windows Store app on the Microsoft website. Look for the page “How to suspend an app” at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/xaml/hh465115.aspx>, and the page “How to resume an app” at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/xaml/hh465110.aspx>.

When you build a new Windows Store app, you can package it by using the tools provided with Visual Studio 2013 and upload it to the Windows Store. Other users can then connect to the store, download your app, and install it. You can charge a fee for your apps, or you can make them available at no cost. This distribution and deployment mechanism depends on your apps being trustworthy and conforming to security policies specified by Microsoft. When you upload an app to the Windows Store, it undergoes a number of checks to verify that it does not contain malicious code and that it conforms to the security requirements of a Windows Store app. These security constraints dictate how your app accesses resources on the computer on which it is installed. For example, by default a Windows Store app cannot write directly to the file system or listen for incoming requests from the network (two of the behaviors commonly exhibited by viruses and other malware). However, if your app needs to perform operations such as these, you can specify them as capabilities in the app manifest by using the manifest editor in Visual Studio 2013. To open the manifest editor, in Solution Explorer, double-click the Package.appxmanifest file.



#### NOTE

You can find more information about the capabilities that Windows Store apps support on the “App capability declarations” page on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/hh464936.aspx>.

This information is recorded in the metadata of your app and signals Microsoft to perform additional tests to verify the way in which your app uses these features. There are also limitations on how these operations work, which are designed to protect the computers on which your app is installed. For example, you can indicate that your app requires access to the files in the Documents folder, but you cannot read or write files located elsewhere on the host computer. Enough theory—let’s get started building a Windows Store app.



## Using the Blank App template to build a Windows Store app

The simplest way to build a Windows Store app is to use the Windows Store app templates included with Visual Studio 2013 on Windows 8.1. Visual Studio 2013 provides three primary templates for this purpose: Blank App, Grid App, and Split App. Each of these templates enables you to quickly create apps that conform to Windows 8.1 user interface guidelines based on the model recommended by Microsoft. In addition, they generate a considerable amount of code, and it helps to understand how this code is structured so that you can adapt it to your own apps and data requirements. The Windows 8.1 versions of the apps used in earlier chapters have made use of the Blank App template, and this is a good place to start.

In the following exercises, you will design and implement the user interface for a simple app for a fictitious company called Adventure Works. This company manufactures and supplies bicycles and associated paraphernalia. The app will enable a user to enter and modify the details of Adventure Works's customers. Create the Adventure Works Customers app

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. On the File menu, point to New, and then click Project.
3. In the New Project dialog box, in the left pane, expand Templates, expand Visual C#, and then click Windows Store.
4. In the middle pane, click the Blank App (XAML) icon.
5. In the Name field, type **Customers**.
6. In the Location field, type **\\Microsoft Press\\Visual CSharp Step By Step\\Chapter 25** in your Documents folder.
7. Click OK.

The new app is created, and the App.xaml.cs file is displayed in the Code and Text Editor window. You can ignore this file for the time being.

8. In Solution Explorer, double-click MainPage.xaml.

The Design View window appears and displays a blank page. You can drag controls from the Toolbox to add the various controls required by the app, as is demonstrated in [Chapter 1](#). However, for the purposes of this exercise, it is more instructive to concentrate on the XAML markup that defines the layout for the form. If you examine this markup, it should look like this:

```
<Page
  x:Class="Customers.MainPage"
  xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"
  xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml"
  xmlns:local="using:Customers"
  xmlns:d="http://schemas.microsoft.com/expression/blend/2008"
  xmlns:mc="http://schemas.openxmlformats.org/markup-compatibility/2006"
  mc:Ignorable="d">
  <Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundThemeBrush}">
  </Grid>
</Page>
```

The form starts with the XAML `<Page>` tag and finishes with a closing `</Page>` tag. Everything between these tags defines the content of the page.

The attributes of the `<Page>` tag contain a number of declarations of the form `xmlns:id = "..."`. These are XAML namespace declarations, and they operate in a similar manner to C# *using* directives inasmuch as they bring items into scope. Many of the controls and other items that you can add to a page are defined in these XAML namespaces, and you can ignore most of these declarations. However, there is one rather curious-looking declaration to which you should pay attention:

```
xmlns:local="using:Customers"
```

This declaration brings the items in the C# *Customers* namespace into scope, with which you can reference classes and other types in this namespace in your XAML code by prefixing them with *local*. The *Customers* namespace is the namespace generated for the code in your app.

9. In Solution Explorer, expand MainPage.xaml, and then double-click MainPage.xaml.cs to display it in the Code and Text Editor window.

10. Remember from the exercises earlier in this book that this is the C# file that contains the app logic and event handlers for the form. It looks like this (the *using* directives at the top of the file have been omitted to save space):

```
// The Blank Page item template is documented at
http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=234238
namespace Customers
{
    /// <summary>
    /// An empty page that can be used on its own or navigated to within a
    Frame.
    /// </summary>
    public sealed partial class MainPage : Page
    {
        public MainPage()
        {
            this.InitializeComponent();
        }
    }
}
```

This file defines the types in the *Customers* namespace. The page is implemented by a class called *MainPage*, and it inherits from the *Page* class. The *Page* class implements the default functionality of a XAML page for a Windows Store app, so all you have to do is write your own code that defines the logic specific to your app in the *MainPage* class.

11. Return to the *MainPage.xaml* file in the Design View window. If you look at the XAML markup for the page, you should notice that the `<Page>` tag includes the following attribute:

```
x:Class="Customers.MainPage"
```

This attribute connects the XAML markup that defines the layout of the page to the *MainPage* class that provides the logic behind the page.

That's the basic plumbing of a simple Windows Store app. Of course, what makes a graphical app valuable is the way in which it presents information to a user. This is not always as simple as it sounds. Designing an attractive and easy-to-use graphical interface requires specialist skills that not all developers have. (I

to-use graphical interface requires specialist skills that not all developers have (I know, because I lack them myself). However, many graphic artists who do have these skills are not programmers, so although they might be able to design a wonderful user interface, they might not be able to implement the logic required to make it useful. Fortunately, Visual Studio 2013 makes it possible you to separate out the user interface design from the business logic so that a graphic artist and a developer can cooperate to build a really cool-looking app that also works well. All a developer has to do is to concentrate on the basic layout of the app and then let a graphic artist provide the styling.

## Implementing a scalable user interface

The key to laying out the user interface for a Windows Store app is to understand how to make it scale and adapt to the different form factors available for the devices on which users might be running the app. In the following exercises, you will investigate how to achieve this scaling.

Lay out the page for the Customers app

1. In Visual Studio, review the XAML markup for the MainPage page.

The page contains a single *Grid* control:

```
<Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundThemeBrush}">
</Grid>
```

### NOTE

Don't worry about the way in which the *Background* property is specified for the *Grid* control. This is an example of using a style, and you will learn about using styles later in this chapter.

Understanding how the *Grid* control works is fundamental to being able to build scalable and flexible user interfaces. The *Page* element can only contain a single item, and if you want, you can replace the *Grid* control with a *Button*, as shown in the example that follows:

### NOTE

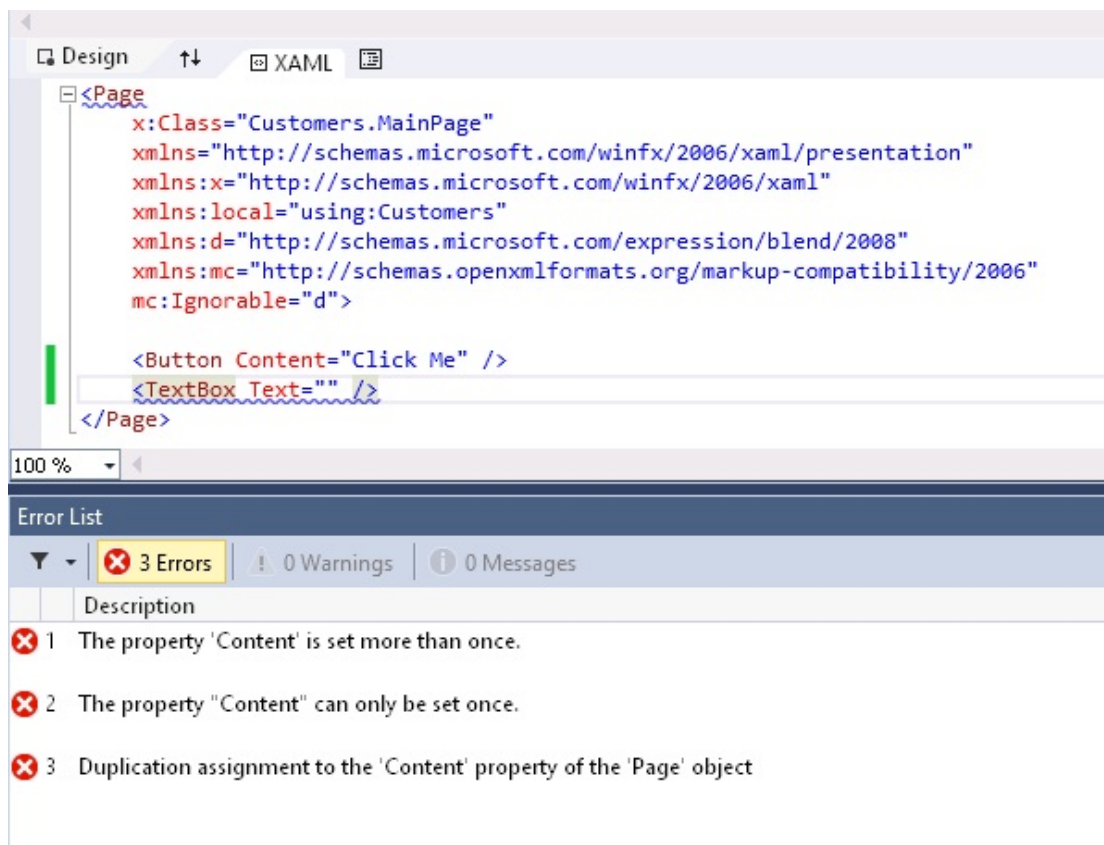
Don't type the following code. It is shown for illustrative purposes only.

```

<Page
    ...
    <Button Content="Click Me">
</Page>

```

However, the resulting app is probably not very useful—a form that contains a button and that displays nothing else is unlikely to win an award for the world’s greatest app. If you attempt to add a second control, such as a *TextBox*, to the page, your code will not compile and the errors shown in the following image will occur:



The purpose of the *Grid* control is to facilitate adding multiple items to a page. The *Grid* control is an example of a container control; it can contain a number of other controls, and you can specify the position of these other controls within the grid. Other container controls are also available. For example, the *StackPanel* control automatically places the controls it contains in a vertical arrangement, with each control positioned directly

below its immediate predecessor.

In this app, you will use a *Grid* to hold the controls necessary for a user to be able to enter and view data for a customer.

2. Add a *TextBlock* control to the page, either by dragging it from the Toolbox or by typing the text `<TextBlock />` directly into the XAML pane on the blank line after the opening `<Grid>` tag, like this:

```
<Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundThemeBrush}">
    <TextBlock >
</Grid>
```

#### TIP

You can type the code for a control directly into the XAML window for a page; you do not have to drag controls from the Toolbox.

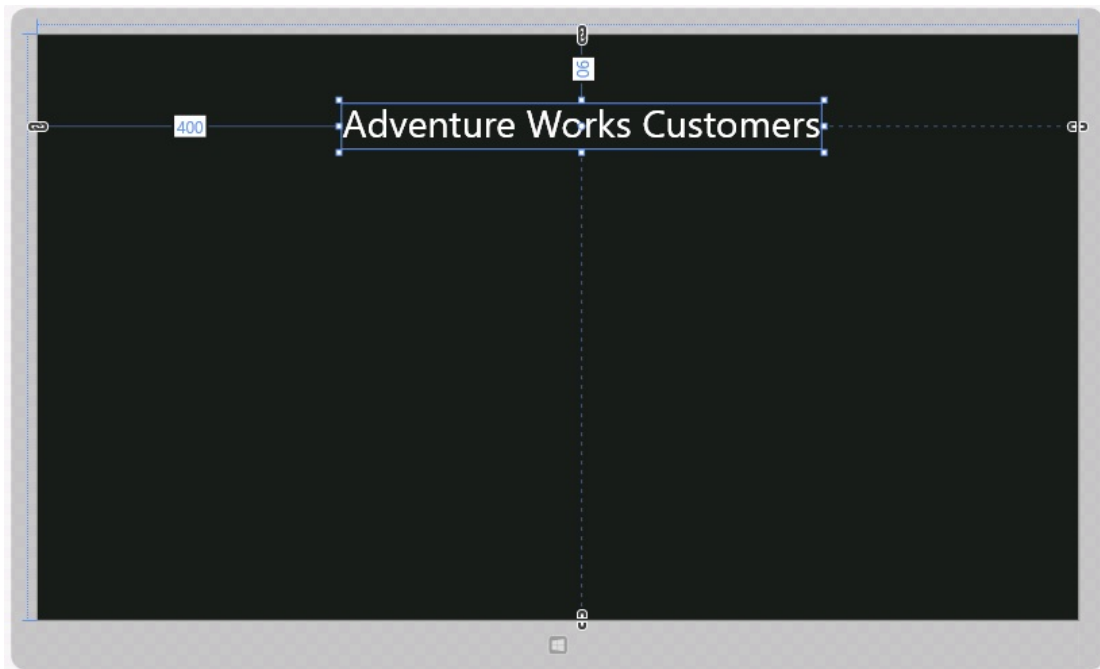
3. This *TextBlock* provides the title for the page. Set the properties of the *TextBlock* control by using the values in the following table:

| Property            | Value                     |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| HorizontalAlignment | Left                      |
| Margin              | 400,90,0,0                |
| TextWrapping        | Wrap                      |
| Text                | Adventure Works Customers |
| VerticalAlignment   | Top                       |
| FontSize            | 50                        |

You can set these properties either by using the Properties window or by typing the equivalent XAML markup into the XAML window, as shown here in bold:

```
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="400,90,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"  
Text="Adventure Works Customers" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="50"/>
```

The resulting text should appear in the Design View window, like this:



Notice that when you drag a control from the Toolbox to a form, connectors appear that specify the distance of two of the sides of the control from the edge of the container control in which it is placed. In the preceding example, for the *TextBlock* control these connectors are labeled with the values 400 (from the left edge of the grid) and 90 (from the top edge of the grid). At run time, if the *Grid* control is resized, the *TextBlock* will move to retain these distances, and in this case it might cause the distance of the *TextBlock* in pixels from the right and bottom edges of the *Grid* to change. You can specify the edge or edges to which a control is anchored by setting the *HorizontalAlignment* and *VerticalAlignment* properties, and the *Margin* property specifies the distance from the anchored edges. Again, in this example, the *HorizontalAlignment* property of the *TextBlock* is set to *Left* and the *VerticalAlignment* property is set to *Top*, which is why the control is anchored to the left and top edges of the grid. The *Margin* property contains four values that specify the distance of the left, top, right, and bottom sides (in that order) of the control from the corresponding edge of the container. If one side of a control is not anchored to an edge of the container, you can set the corresponding value in the *Margin* property to 0.

4. Add four more *TextBlock* controls to the page. These *TextBlock* controls are labels that help the user to identify the data that is displayed on the page. Use the values in the following table to set the properties of these controls:

| Control      | Property            | Value       |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------|
| First Label  | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|              | Margin              | 330,190,0,0 |
|              | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|              | Text                | ID          |
|              | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|              | FontSize            | 20          |
| Second Label | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|              | Margin              | 460,190,0,0 |
|              | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|              | Text                | Title       |
|              | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|              | FontSize            | 20          |
| Third Label  | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|              | Margin              | 620,190,0,0 |
|              | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|              | Text                | First Name  |
|              | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|              | FontSize            | 20          |
| Fourth Label | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|              | Margin              | 975,190,0,0 |
|              | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |



|  |                   |           |
|--|-------------------|-----------|
|  | Text              | Last Name |
|  | VerticalAlignment | Top       |
|  | FontSize          | 20        |

As before, you can either drag the controls from the Toolbox and use the Properties window to set their properties or you can type the following XAML markup into the XAML pane, after the existing *TextBlock* control and before the closing `</Grid>` tag:

```
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="330,190,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="ID" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="20">
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="460,190,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Title" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="20">
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="620,190,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="First Name" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="20">
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="975,190,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Last Name" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="20">
```

5. Add three *TextBox* controls below the *TextBlock* controls that display the text ID, First Name, and Last Name. Use the following table to set the values of these controls. Notice that the *Text* property should be set to the empty string, `""`. Also notice that the *id TextBox* control is marked as read-only. This is because customer IDs will be generated automatically in the code that you add later:

| Control       | Property            | Value       |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| First TextBox | x:Name              | id          |
|               | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|               | Margin              | 300,240,0,0 |
|               | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|               | Text                |             |
|               | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|               | FontSize            | 20          |
|               | IsReadOnly          | True        |

|                |                     |             |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Second TextBox | x:Name              | firstName   |
|                | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|                | Margin              | 550,240,0,0 |
|                | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|                | Text                |             |
|                | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|                | FontSize            | 20          |
| Third TextBox  | x:Name              | lastName    |
|                | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|                | Margin              | 875,240,0,0 |
|                | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|                | Text                |             |
|                | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|                | FontSize            | 20          |

The following code shows the equivalent XAML markup for these controls:

```
<TextBox x:Name="id" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="300,240,0,0"
TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="20" IsReadOnly="True">
<TextBox x:Name="firstName" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="550,240,0,0"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Top" Width="300" FontSize="20">
<TextBox x:Name="lastName" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="875,240,0,0"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Top" Width="300"
FontSize="20"/>
```

The *Name* property is not required for a control, but it is useful if you want to refer to the control in the C# code for the app. Notice that the *Name* property is prefixed with *x:*. This is a reference to the XML namespace <http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml> specified in the *Page* attributes at the top of the XAML markup. This namespace defines the

*Name* property for all controls.

#### NOTE

It is not necessary to understand why the *Name* property is defined in this way, but for more information, you can read the article “x:Name Directive” at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/ms752290.aspx>.

The *Width* property specifies the width of the control, and the *TextWrapping* property indicates what happens if the user attempts to enter information into the control that exceeds this width. In this case, all the *TextBox* controls will wrap the text onto another line of the same width (the control will expand vertically). The alternative value, *NoWrap*, causes the text to scroll horizontally as the user enters it.

6. Add a *ComboBox* control to the form and place it below the *Title TextBlock* control, between the *id* and *firstName TextBox* controls. Set the properties of this control as follows:

| Property            | Value       |
|---------------------|-------------|
| x:Name              | title       |
| HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
| Margin              | 420,240,0,0 |
| VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
| Width               | 100         |
| FontSize            | 20          |

The equivalent XAML markup for this control is as follows:

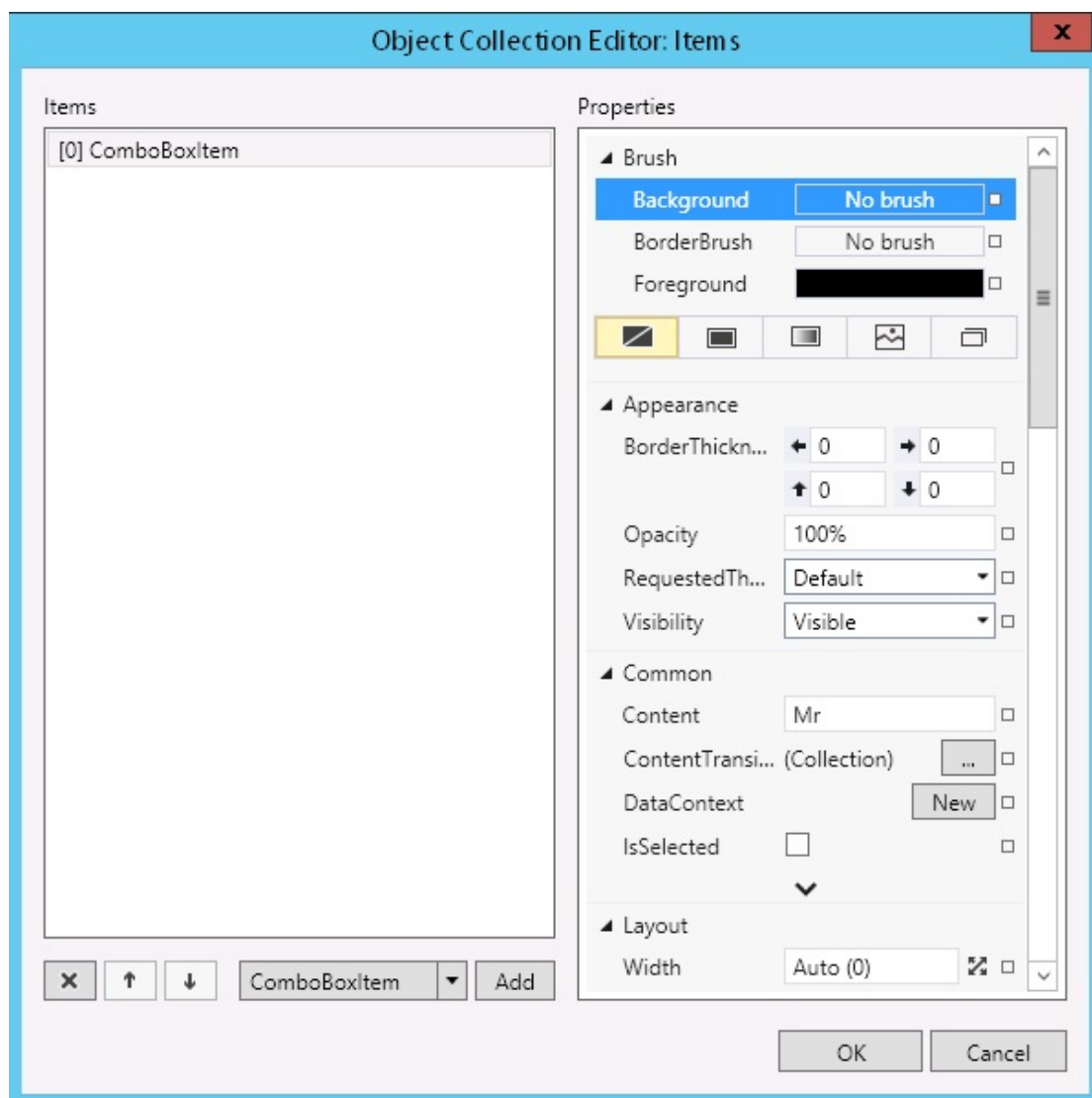
```
<ComboBox x:Name="title" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="420,240,0,0"
VerticalAlignment="Top" Width="100" FontSize="20"/>
```

You use a *ComboBox* control to display a list of values from which the user can select.

7. In the Design View window, click the title ComboBox, and in the Properties window expand the Common property category if it is not already expanded. Then, click the ellipsis button that appears alongside the Items property.

The Object Collection Editor window opens.

8. In the list toward the lower left of the window, select ComboBoxItem, and then click Add. In the right pane displaying the properties for the item, expand the Common section if it is not already expanded, and then type **Mr** in the Content property.



9. Click OK.

The Object Collection Editor closes. If you examine the XAML markup for the *title ComboBox*, it should now look like this:

```
<ComboBox x:Name="title" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="420,240,0,0"
VerticalAlignment="Top" Width="100" FontSize="20"/>
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Mr">
</ComboBox>
```

There are two things to notice here. The first is that the *ComboBox* markup has been split into an opening `<ComboBox>` tag and a closing `</ComboBox>` tag. The second is that, between these tags, Visual Studio has added a *ComboBoxItem* element with the *Content* property set to *Mr*. This item will be displayed in a drop-down list when the app runs.

10. Add the values *Mrs*, *Ms*, and *Miss* to the *title ComboBox*. You can either use the Object Collection Editor or type the XAML markup by hand. The resulting markup should look like this:

```
<ComboBox x:Name="title" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="420,240,0,0"
VerticalAlignment="Top" Width="75" FontSize="20">
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Mr">
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Mrs">
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Ms">
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Miss">
</ComboBox>
```

#### NOTE

A *ComboBox* control can display simple elements such as a set of *ComboBoxItem* controls that display text, but it can also contain more complex elements such as buttons, check boxes, and radio buttons. If you are adding simple *ComboBoxItem* controls, it is probably easier to type the XAML markup by hand, but if you are adding more complex controls, the Object Collection Editor can prove very useful. However, you should avoid trying to be too clever in a combo box; the best apps are those that provide the most intuitive UIs, and embedding complex controls in a combo box can be confusing to a user.

11. Add two more *TextBox* controls and two more *TextBlock* controls to the form. With the *TextBox* controls, the user will be able to enter an email address and telephone number for the customer, and the *TextBlock* controls

provide the labels for the text boxes. Use the values in the following table to set the properties of the controls.

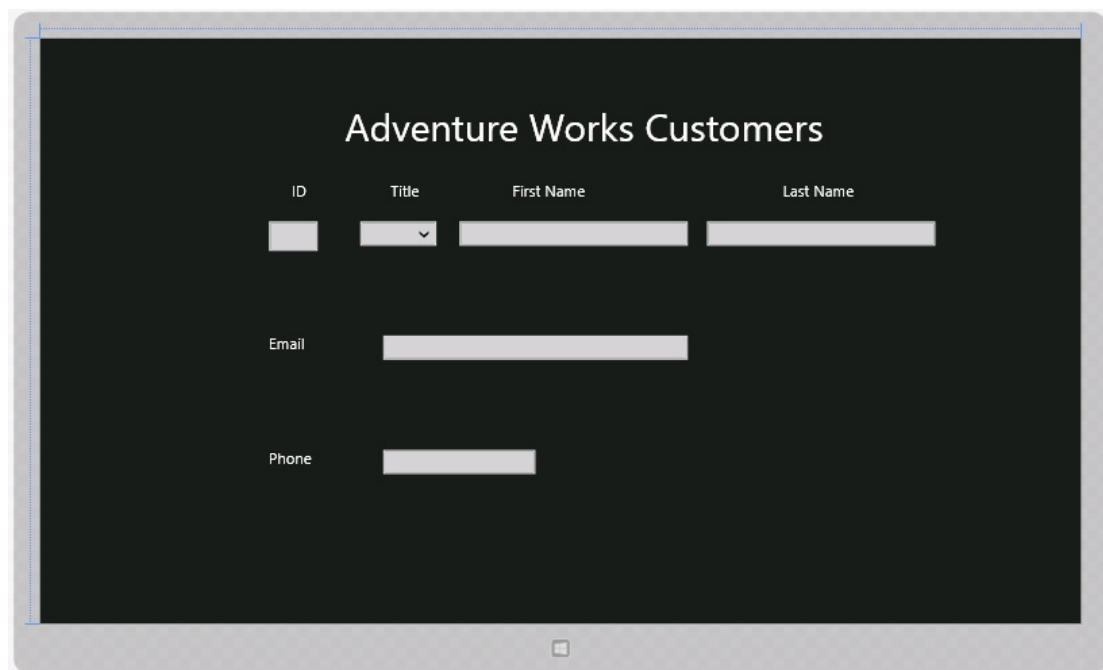
| Control          | Property            | Value       |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| First TextBlock  | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|                  | Margin              | 300,390,0,0 |
|                  | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|                  | Text                | Email       |
|                  | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|                  | FontSize            | 20          |
| First TextBox    | x:Name              | email       |
|                  | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|                  | Margin              | 450,390,0,0 |
|                  | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|                  | Text                | Leave Empty |
|                  | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|                  | Width               | 400         |
|                  | FontSize            | 20          |
| Second TextBlock | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|                  | Margin              | 300,540,0,0 |
|                  | TextWrapping        | Wrap        |
|                  | Text                | Phone       |
|                  | VerticalAlignment   | Top         |
|                  | FontSize            | 20          |
| Second TextBox   | x:Name              | phone       |
|                  | HorizontalAlignment | Left        |
|                  |                     |             |

|  |                   |             |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
|  | Margin            | 450,540,0,0 |
|  | TextWrapping      | Wrap        |
|  | Text              | Leave Empty |
|  | VerticalAlignment | Top         |
|  | Width             | 200         |
|  | FontSize          | 20          |

The XAML markup for these controls should look like this:

```
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="300,390,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Email" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="20">
<TextBox x:Name="email" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="450,390,0,0"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Top" Width="400" FontSize="20">
<TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="300,540,0,0" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Phone" VerticalAlignment="Top" FontSize="20">
<TextBox x:Name="phone" HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="450,540,0,0"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Top" Width="200" FontSize="20">
```

The completed form in the Design View window should look like this:



- On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app.

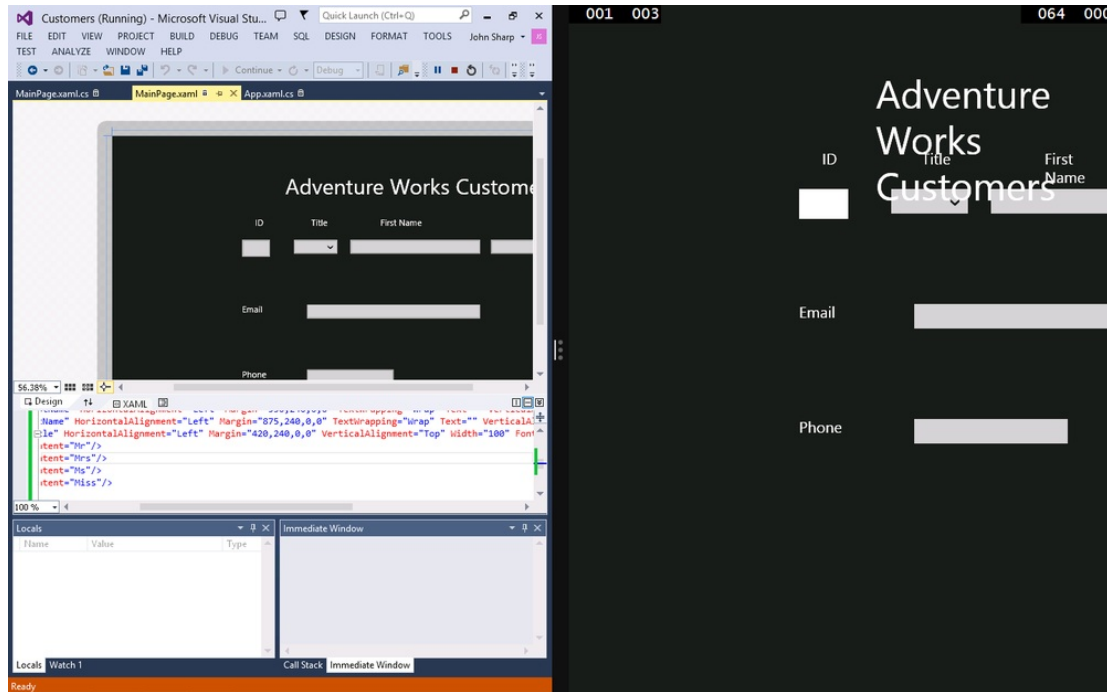
The app starts and displays the form. You can enter data into the form and

select a title from the combo box, but you cannot do much else yet.

13. While the app is running, click in the upper-left corner of the screen and drag the image of Visual Studio running on the desktop.

The Customers app adjusts itself and occupies half of the screen.

Depending on the resolution of your screen, the title will wrap around and the Last Name field will fall off the right edge, as illustrated here:



14. Resize the window displaying the Customer app to its minimum width. This time, much of the form disappears (it is displayed in an area that is only 500 pixels wide). Some of the *TextBlock* content wraps, but the form is clearly not usable in this view.

You can also resize the view to make it bigger, occupying approximately two-thirds of the screen. Again, depending on the resolution available, some of the text might wrap and some of the controls might not be visible on the screen.

#### NOTE

The default minimum width of an app (500 pixels) is designed to reflect the size of a typical tablet device when it is held in the portrait orientation. You should remember



that not all users will be running your app on a desktop computer, and so you must ensure that it presents a functional user interface at this width. You can also configure an app to support a minimum width of 320 pixels. This is the width of many Windows Phone devices. To change the default minimum width, edit the *Minimum Width* setting in the Application UI page of the Package.appxmanifest file in the manifest editor in Visual Studio.

15. Return to Visual Studio, and on the Debug menu, click Stop Debugging.

That was a salutary lesson in being careful about how you lay out an app. Although the app looked fine when it ran full-screen, as soon as you resized the window to a narrower view it became less useful (or even completely useless). Additionally, the app assumes that the user will be viewing the screen on a device in the landscape orientation. If the user is running the app on a tablet that supports different orientations, and the user rotates the device to switch to portrait mode, it will look like this:

# Adventure Works Customers

ID

Title

First Name

Email

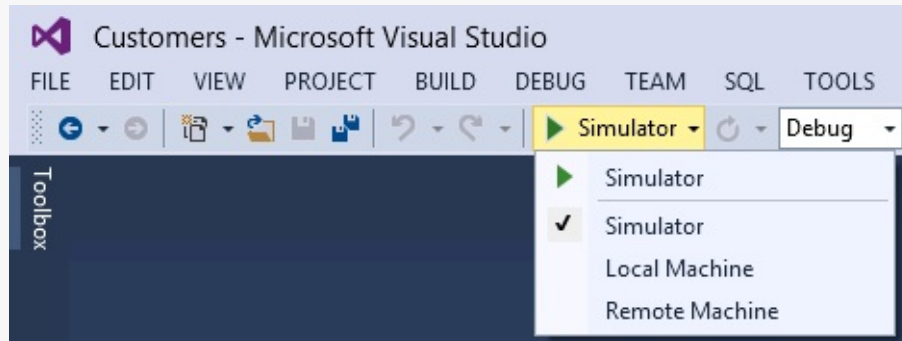
Phone

The issue is that the layout technique shown so far does not scale and adapt to different form factors and orientations. Fortunately, you can use the properties of the *Grid* control and another feature called the Visual State Manager to solve these problems.

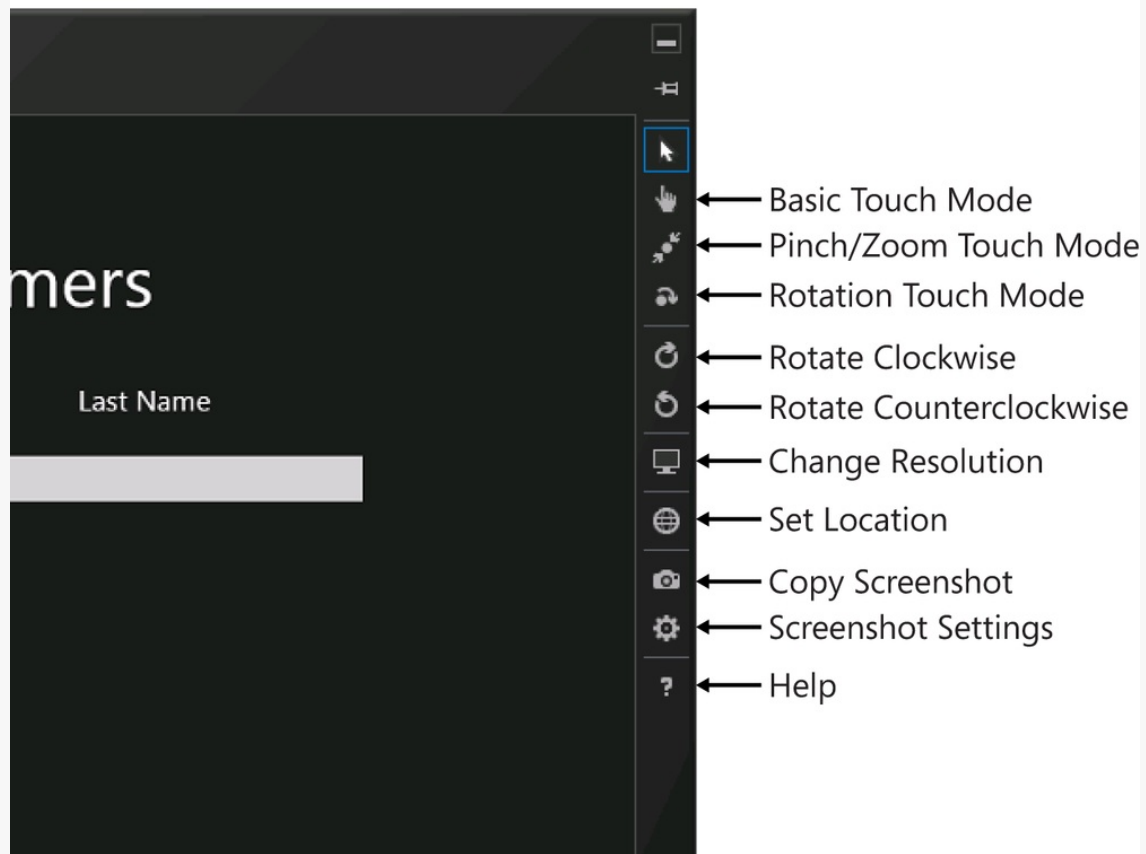
### USING THE SIMULATOR TO TEST A WINDOWS STORE APP

Even if you don't have a tablet computer, you can still test your Windows Store apps and see how they behave on a mobile device by using the Simulator provided with Visual Studio 2013. The Simulator mimics a tablet device, providing the ability to emulate user gestures such as pinching and swiping objects, as well as rotating and changing the resolution of the device.

To run an app in the Simulator, on the Visual Studio toolbar, click the Debug Target list box, directly below the Debug menu. By default, the debug target is set to Local Machine, which causes the app to run full-screen on your computer, but you can select Simulator from this list, which starts the Simulator when you debug the app. Note that you can also set the debug target to a different computer if you need to perform remote debugging (you will be prompted for the network address of the remote computer when you select this option). The following image shows the Debug Target list:



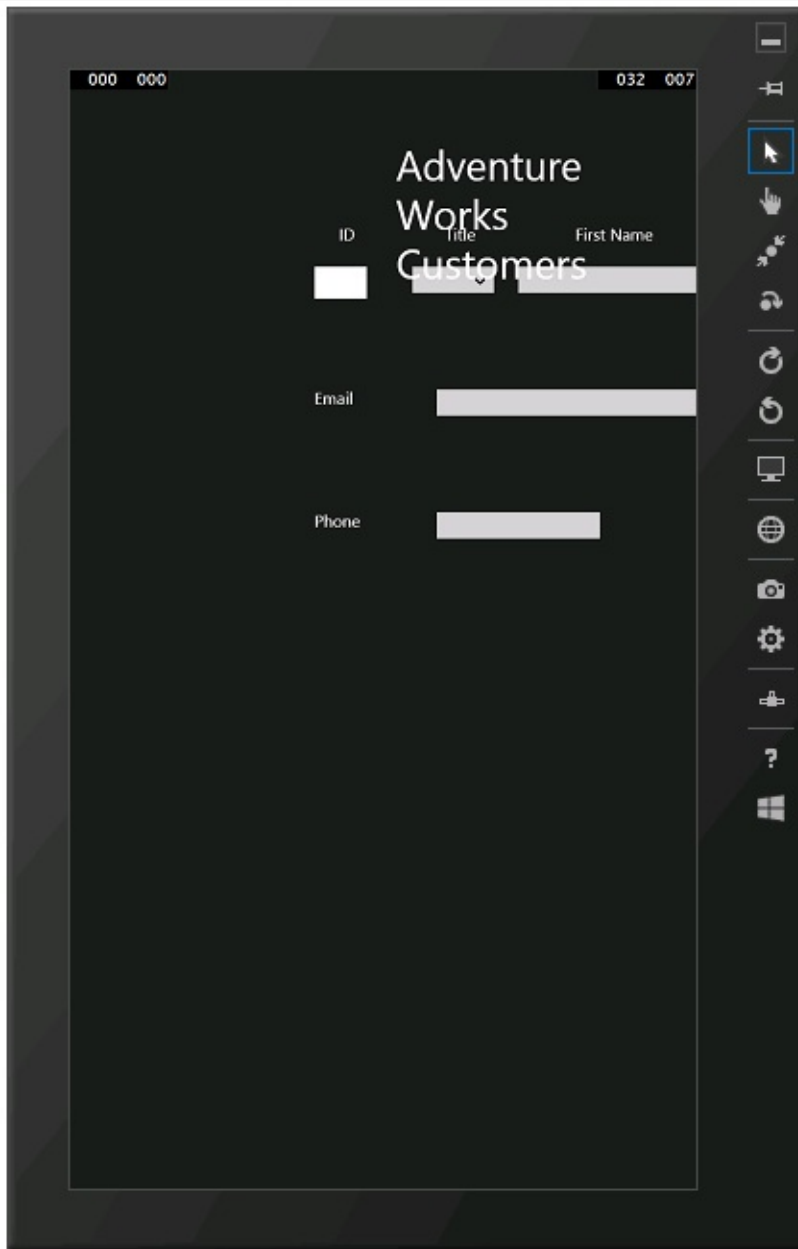
After you have selected the Simulator, when you run the app from the Debug menu in Visual Studio, the Simulator starts and displays your app. The toolbar down the left side of the Simulator window contains a selection of tools with which you can emulate user gestures by using the mouse. You can even simulate the location of the user if the app requires information about the geographic position of the device. However, for testing the layout of an app, the most important tools are Rotate Clockwise, Rotate Counterclockwise, and Change Resolution. The following image shows the Customers app running in the Simulator. The labels down the right side describe the function of each of the buttons for the Simulator.



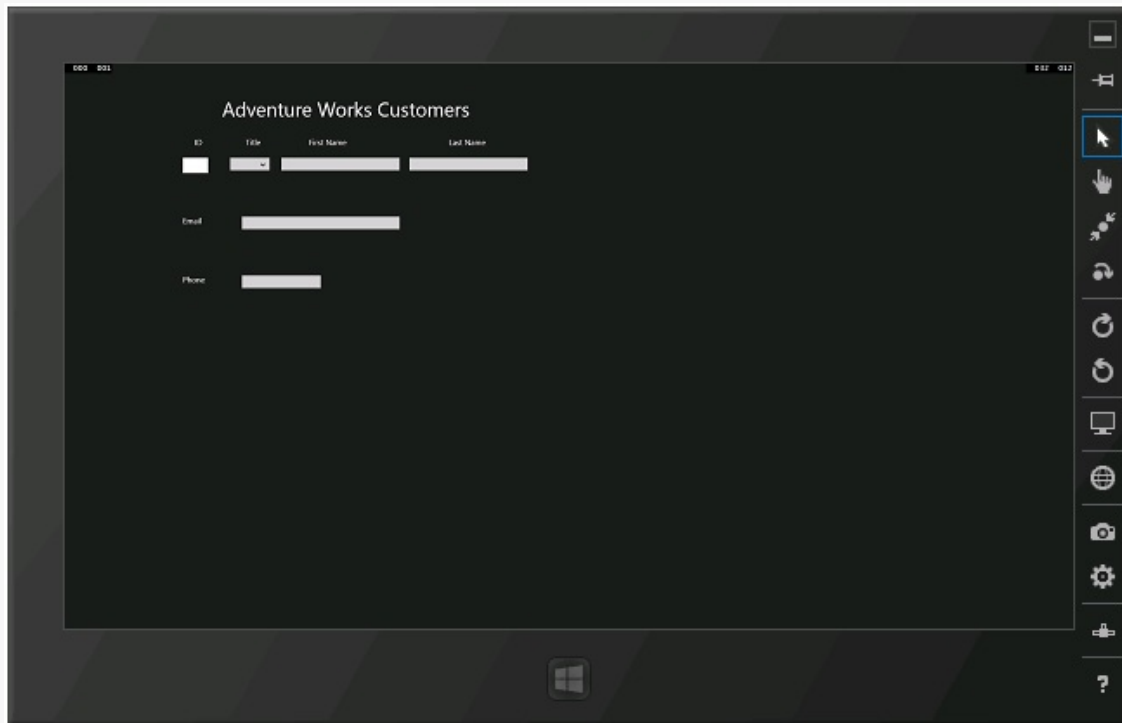
#### NOTE

The screen shots in this section were captured on a computer with a screen resolution of  $1366 \times 768$ . By default, the Simulator starts running in the same resolution as your display. If you are using a different display resolution, you might need to click the Change Resolution button and switch to  $1366 \times 768$  to get the same results, as shown here.

The following image shows the same app after the user has clicked the Rotate Clockwise button, causing the app to run in the portrait orientation:



You can also try seeing how the app behaves if you change the resolution of the Simulator. The following image shows the Customers app running when the Simulator is set to a high resolution ( $2560 \times 1440$ , the typical resolution of a 27-inch monitor). You can see that the app is squeezed into the upper-left corner of the screen:



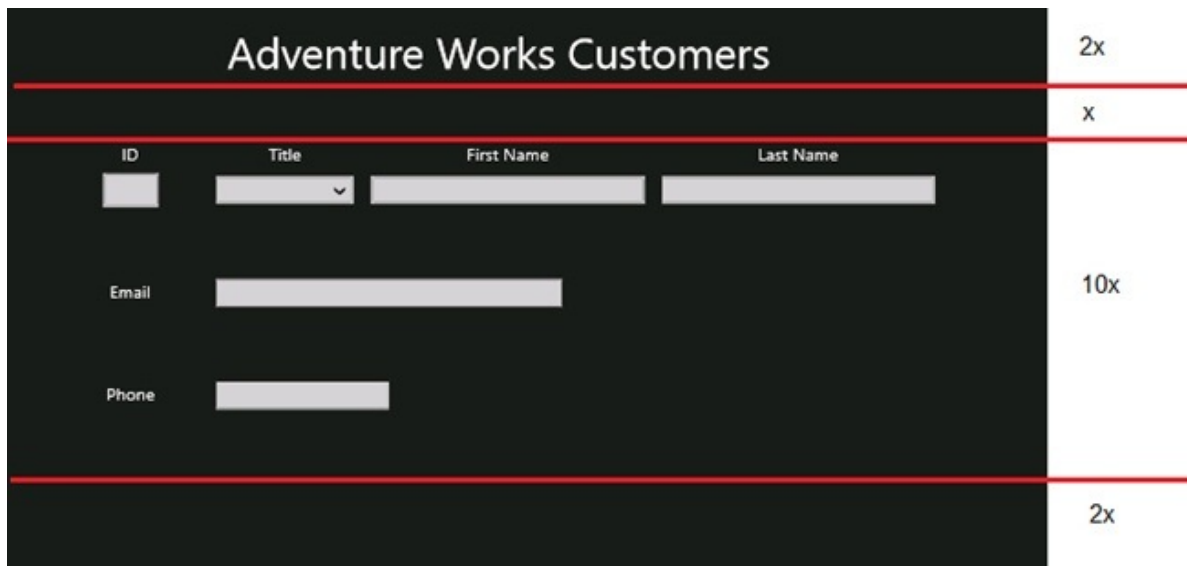
The Simulator behaves exactly like a Windows 8.1 computer (it is, in fact, a remote-desktop connection to your own computer). To stop the Simulator, select the Settings charm, click Power, and then click Disconnect.

## Implementing a tabular layout by using a *Grid* control

You can use the *Grid* control to implement a tabular layout. A *Grid* contains rows and columns, and you can specify in which rows and columns other controls should be placed. The beauty of the *Grid* control is that you can specify the sizes of the rows and columns that it contains as relative values; as the grid shrinks or grows to adapt itself to the different form factors and orientations to which users might switch, the rows and columns can shrink and grow in proportion to the grid. The intersection of a row and a column in a grid defines a cell, and if you position controls in cells, they will move as the rows and columns shrink and grow. Therefore, the key to implementing a scalable UI is to break it down into a collection of cells and place related elements in the same cell. A cell can contain another grid, giving you the ability to fine-tune the exact positioning of each element.

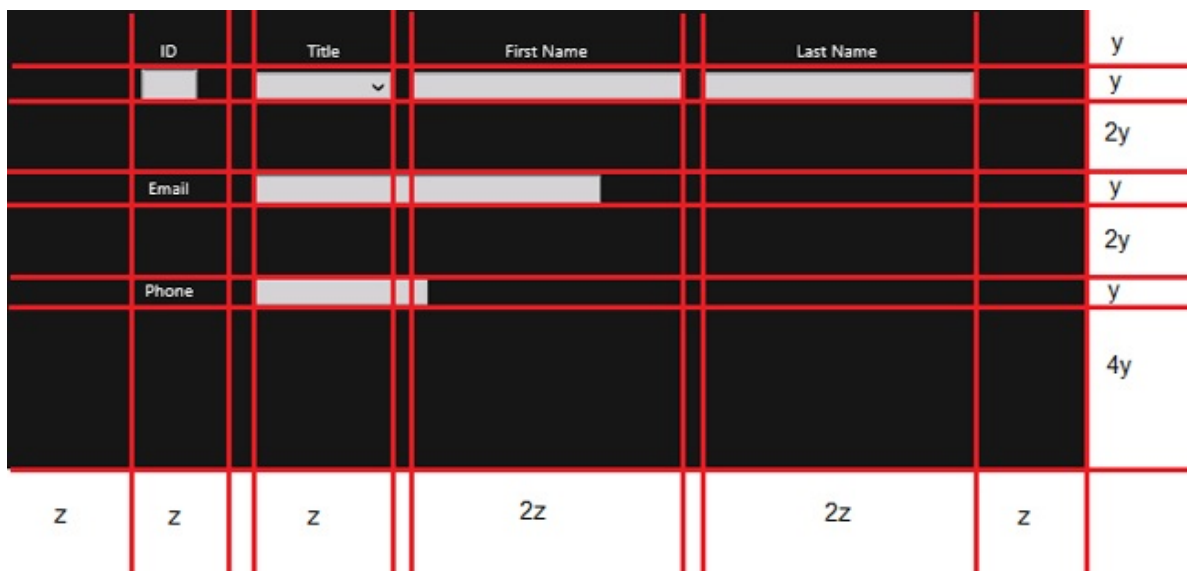
If you consider the Customers app, you can see that the UI breaks down into two main areas: a heading containing the title and the body containing the customers' details. Allowing for some spacing between these areas, and a margin at the

bottom of the form, you can assign relative sizes to each of these areas, as shown in the following diagram:



The diagram shows only rough approximations, but the row for the heading is twice as high as the row for the spacer below it. The row for the body is ten times as high as the spacer, and the bottom margin is twice the height of the spacer.

To hold the elements in each area, you can define a grid with four rows and place the appropriate items in each row. However, the body of the form can be described by another, more complex grid, as shown in the following diagram:



Again, the heights of each of the rows are specified in relative terms, as are the

widths of the columns. Also, you can clearly see that the *TextBox* elements for the Email and Phone information do not quite fit into this grid pattern. If you were being pedantic, you might choose to define further grids inside the body of the form to make these items fit. However, you should keep in mind the purpose of this grid, which is to define the relative positioning and spacing of elements. Therefore, it is acceptable for an element to extend beyond the boundaries of a cell in the grid arrangement.

In the next exercise, you will modify the layout of the Customers app to use this grid format to position the controls.

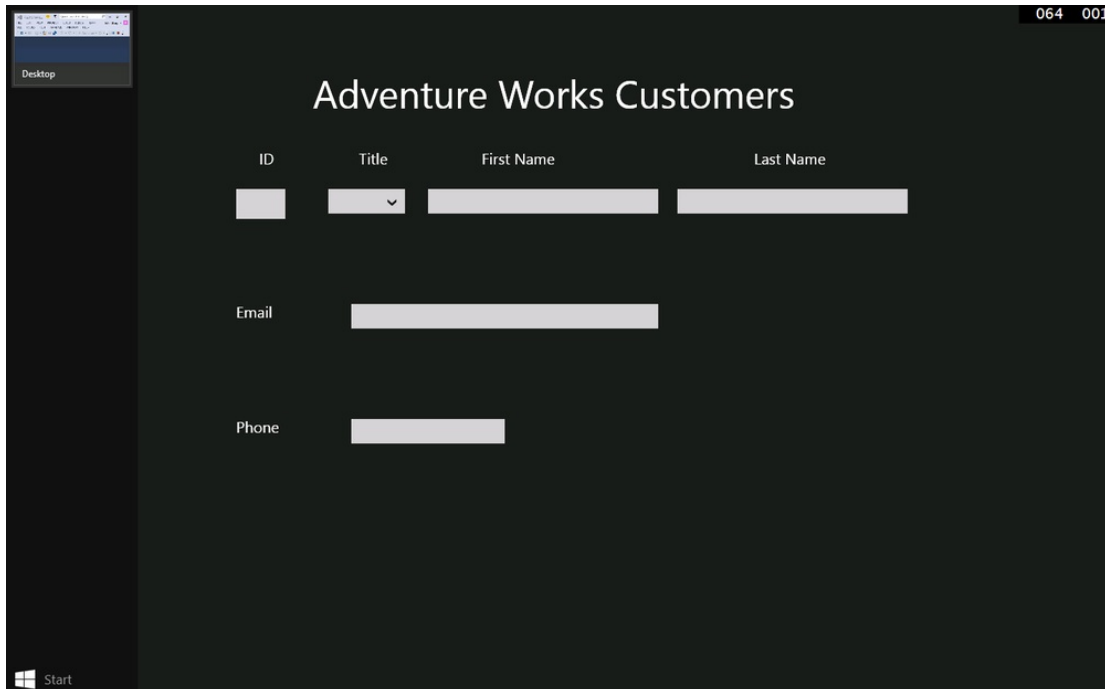
Modify the layout to scale to different form factors and orientations

1. In the XAML pane for the Customers app, add another *Grid* inside the existing *Grid* element. Give this new *Grid* a margin of 40 pixels from the left edge of the parent *Grid* and 54 pixels from the top, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
<Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundThemeBrush}">
    <Grid Margin="40,54,0,0">
    </Grid>
    <TextBlock HorizontalAlignment="Left" TextWrapping="Wrap"
    Text="Adventure Works Customers" ... >
    ...
</Grid>
```

You could define the rows and columns as part of the existing *Grid*, but to maintain a consistent look and feel with other Windows Store apps, you should leave some blank space to the left and at the top of a page. These margins make it possible for Windows 8.1 to display its various icons and toolbars, such as the icons showing the apps that are currently running and the Start menu, without overwriting data on the screen. The following image shows an example:





2. Add the following `<Grid.RowDefinitions>` section shown in bold to the new `Grid` element.

```
<Grid Margin="40,54,0,0">
  <Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
    <RowDefinition Height="" />
    <RowDefinition Height="10" />
    <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
  </Grid.RowDefinitions>
</Grid>
```

The `<Grid.RowDefinitions>` section defines the rows for the grid. In this example, you have defined four rows. You can specify the size of a row as an absolute value specified in pixels, or you can use the `*` operator to indicate that the sizes are relative and that Windows should calculate the row sizes itself when the app runs, depending on the form factor and resolution of the screen. The values used in this example correspond to the relative row sizes for the header, body, spacer, and bottom margin of the Customers form shown in the earlier diagram.

3. Move the `TextBlock` control that contains the text “Adventure Works

Customers” into the *Grid*, after the closing `</Grid.RowDefinitions>` tag.

4. Add a *Grid.Row* attribute to the *TextBlock* control and set the value to 0.

This indicates that the *TextBlock* should be positioned within the first row of the *Grid* (*Grid* controls number rows and columns starting at zero).

#### NOTE

The *Grid.Row* attribute is an example of an attached property. An *attached property* is a property that a control receives from the container control in which it is placed. Outside of a grid, a *TextBlock* does not have a *Row* property (it would be meaningless), but when positioned within a grid, the *Row* property is attached to the *TextBlock*, and the *TextBlock* control can assign it a value. The *Grid* control then uses this value to determine where to display the *TextBlock* control.

Attached properties are easy to spot because they have the form *ContainerType.PropertyName*.

5. Remove the *Margin* property, and set the *HorizontalAlignment* and *VerticalAlignment* properties to *Center*.

This will cause the *TextBlock* to appear centered in the row.

The XAML markup for the *Grid* and *TextBlock* controls should look like this (the changes to the *TextBlock* are highlighted in bold):

```
<Grid Margin="40,54,0,0">
  <Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
    <RowDefinition Height="" />
    <RowDefinition Height="10" />
    <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
  </Grid.RowDefinitions>
  <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Adventure Works Customers" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="50">
    ...
</Grid>
```

6. After the *TextBlock* control, add another nested *Grid* control. This *Grid* will be used to lay out the controls in the body of the form and should appear in the third row of the outer *Grid* (the row of size 10\*), so set the

*Grid.Row* property to 2, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
<Grid Margin="40,54,0,0">
  <Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
    <RowDefinition Height="" />
    <RowDefinition Height="10" />
    <RowDefinition Height="2*" />
  </Grid.RowDefinitions>
  <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center" .../>
  <Grid Grid.Row="2">
  </Grid>
  ...
</Grid>
```

7. Add the following *<Grid.RowDefinition>* and *<Grid.ColumnDefinition>* sections to the new *Grid* control:

```
<Grid Grid.Row="2">
  <Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <RowDefinition Height="" />
    <RowDefinition Height="" />
    <RowDefinition Height="2" />
    <RowDefinition Height="" />
    <RowDefinition Height="2" />
    <RowDefinition Height="" />
    <RowDefinition Height="4*" />
  </Grid.RowDefinitions>
  <Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
    <ColumnDefinition Width="" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="20" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="20" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="2" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="20" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="2" />
    <ColumnDefinition Width="" />
  </Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
</Grid>
```

These row and column definitions specify the height and width of each of the rows and columns shown in the earlier diagram that depicted the structure of the body of the form. There is a small space of 20 pixels

between each of the columns that will hold controls.

8. Move the *TextBlock* controls that display the ID, Title, Last Name, and First Name labels inside the nested *Grid* control, immediately after the closing *<Grid.ColumnDefinitions>* tag.
9. Set the *Grid.Row* property for each *TextBlock* control to 0 (these labels will appear in the first row of the grid). Set the *Grid.Column* property for the ID label to 1, the *Grid.Column* property for the Title label to 3, the *Grid.Column* property for the First Name label to 5, and the *Grid.Column* property for the Last Name label to 7.
10. Remove the *Margin* property from each of the *TextBlock* controls, and set the *HorizontalAlignment* and *VerticalAlignment* properties to *Center*.
11. The XAML markup for these controls should look like this (the changes are highlighted in bold):

```
<Grid Grid.Row="2">
    <Grid.RowDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
    <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="1" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="ID" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
    <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="3" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="Title" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
    <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="5" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="First Name" VerticalAlignment="Center"
FontSize="20"/>
    <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="7" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="Last Name" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20">
</Grid>
```

12. Move the *id*, *firstName* and *lastName* *TextBox* controls and the *title* *ComboBox* control inside the nested *Grid* control, immediately after the *Last Name TextBlock* control.

Place these controls in row 1 of the *Grid* control. Put the *id* control in

column 1, the *title* control in column 3, the *firstName* control in column 5, and the *lastName* control in column 7.

Remove the *Margin* of each of these controls, and set the *VerticalAlignment* property to *Center*. Remove the *Width* property, and set the *HorizontalAlignment* property to *Stretch*.

This causes the control to occupy the entire cell when it is displayed, and the control shrinks or grows as the size of the cell changes.

The completed XAML markup for these controls should look like this, with changes highlighted in bold:

```
<Grid Grid.Row="2">
    <Grid.RowDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
    ...
    <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="7" ... Text="Last Name" .../>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="id"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"
IsReadOnly="True"/>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="5" x:Name="firstName"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch" TextWrapping="Wrap" Text=""
VerticalAlignment="Center"
FontSize="20"/>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="7" x:Name="lastName"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
    <ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="3" x:Name="title"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20">
        <ComboBoxItem Content="Mr"/>
        <ComboBoxItem Content="Mrs">
        <ComboBoxItem Content="Ms">
        <ComboBoxItem Content="Miss">
    </ComboBox>
</Grid>
```

13. Move the *TextBlock* control for the Email label and the *email TextBox* control to the nested *Grid* control, immediately after the closing tag of the

title *ComboBox* control.

Place these controls in row 3 of the *Grid* control. Put the Email label in column 1 and the *email TextBox* control in column 3. Additionally, set the *Grid.ColumnSpan* property for the *email TextBox* control to 3; this way, the column can spread to the value specified by its *Width* property across three columns, as shown in the earlier diagram.

Set the *HorizontalAlignment* property of the Email label control to *Center*, but leave the *HorizontalAlignment* property of the *email TextBox* set to *Left*; this control should remain left-justified against the first column that it spans rather than being centered across them all.

Set the *VerticalAlignment* property of the Email label and the *email TextBox* control to *Center*.

Remove the *Margin* property for both of these controls.

The following XAML markup shows the completed definitions of these controls:

```
<Grid Grid.Row="2">
  <Grid.RowDefinitions>
    ...
  </Grid.RowDefinitions>
  <Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
    ...
  </Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
  ...
  <ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="3" x:Name="title"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20">
    ...
  </ComboBox>
  <TextBlock Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="1" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="Email" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
  <TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="3" Grid.ColumnSpan="3" x:Name="email"
HorizontalAlignment="Left" TextWrapping="Wrap" Text=""
VerticalAlignment="Center"
Width="400" FontSize="20">
</Grid>
```

14. Move the *TextBlock* control for the Phone label and *phone TextBox* control to the nested *Grid* control, immediately after the *email TextBox* control.

Place these controls in row 5 of the *Grid* control. Put the Phone label in column 1 and the *phone TextBox* control in column 3. Set the *Grid.ColumnSpan* property for the *phone TextBox* control to 3.

Set the *HorizontalAlignment* property of the Phone label control to *Center* and leave the *HorizontalAlignment* property of the *phone TextBox* set to *Left*.

Set the *VerticalAlignment* property of both controls to *Center* and remove the *Margin* property.

The following XAML markup shows the completed definitions of these controls:

```
<Grid Grid.Row="2">
    <Grid.RowDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
    ...
    <TextBox ... " x:Name="email" .../>
    <TextBlock Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="1" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="Phone" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="3" Grid.ColumnSpan="3" x:Name="phone"
HorizontalAlignment="Left" TextWrapping="Wrap" Text=""
VerticalAlignment="Center"
Width="200" FontSize="20">
</Grid>
```

15. On the Visual Studio toolbar, in the Debug Target list, select Simulator.

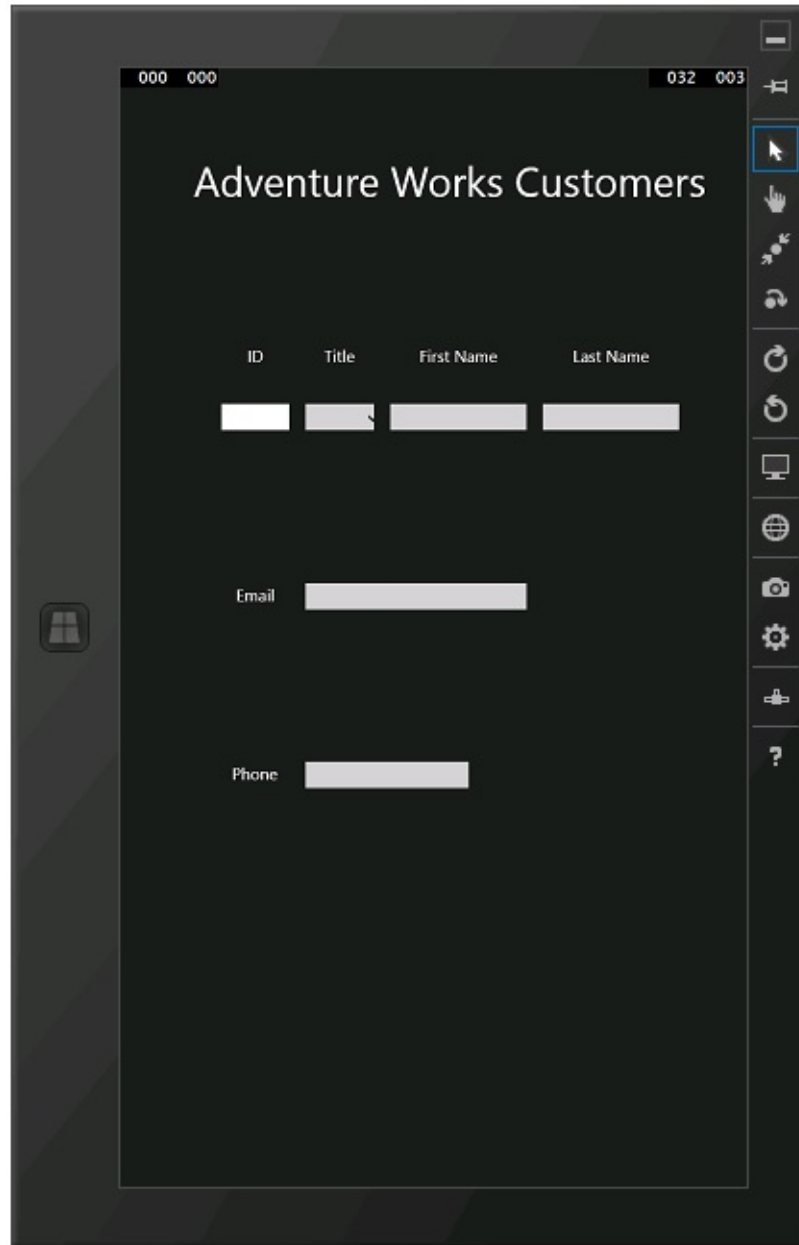
You will run the app in the Simulator so that you can see how the layout adapts in different resolutions and form factors.

16. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

The Simulator starts and the Customers app runs. Click Change Resolution and configure the Simulator to display the app using a screen resolution of  $1366 \times 768$ . Also, ensure that the Simulator is displayed in landscape orientation (click Rotate Clockwise if it is running in portrait orientation). Verify that the controls are evenly spaced in this orientation.

17. Click the Rotate Clockwise button to rotate the Simulator to portrait orientation.

The Customers app should adjust the layout of the user interface, and the controls should still be evenly spaced and usable:



18. Click Rotate Counterclockwise to put the Simulator back to landscape orientation, and then click Change Resolution and switch the resolution of the Simulator to  $2560 \times 1400$ .

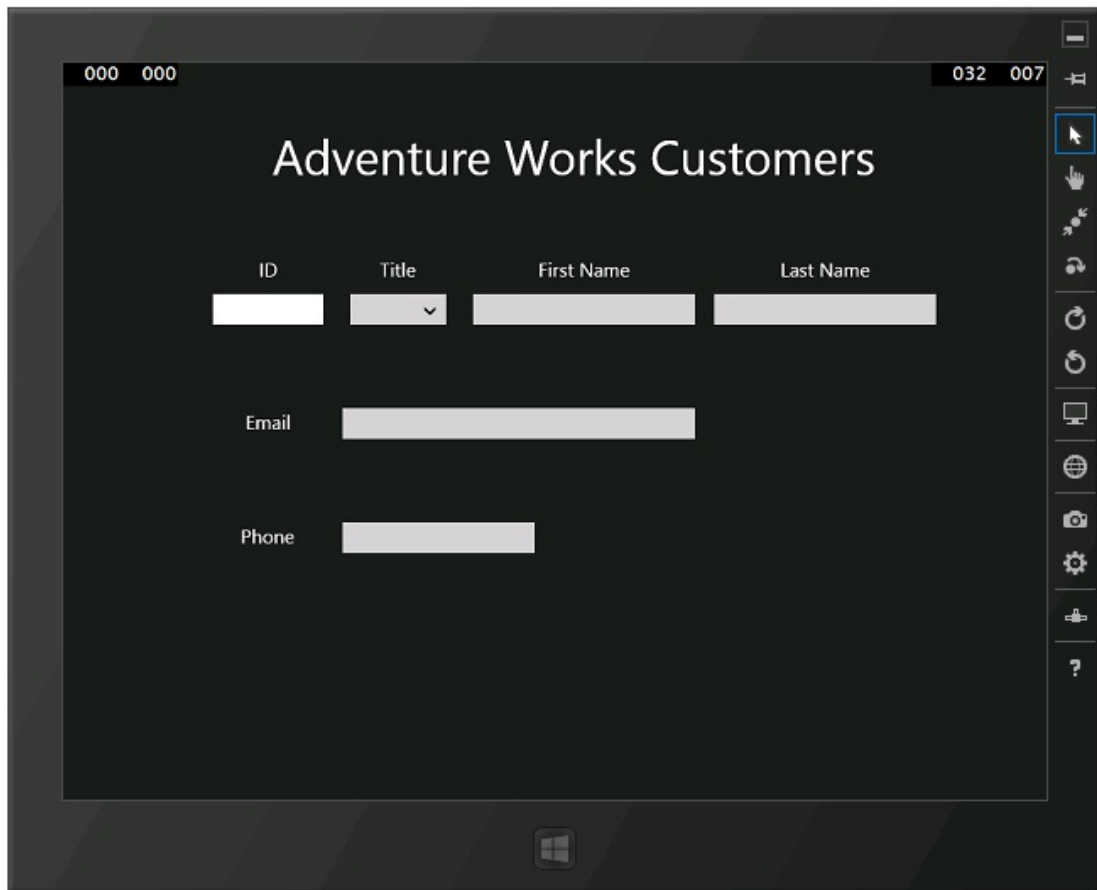
Notice that the controls remain evenly spaced on the form, although the



labels might be quite difficult to read unless you actually have a 27-inch screen.

19. Click Change Resolution again and switch the resolution to  $1024 \times 768$ .

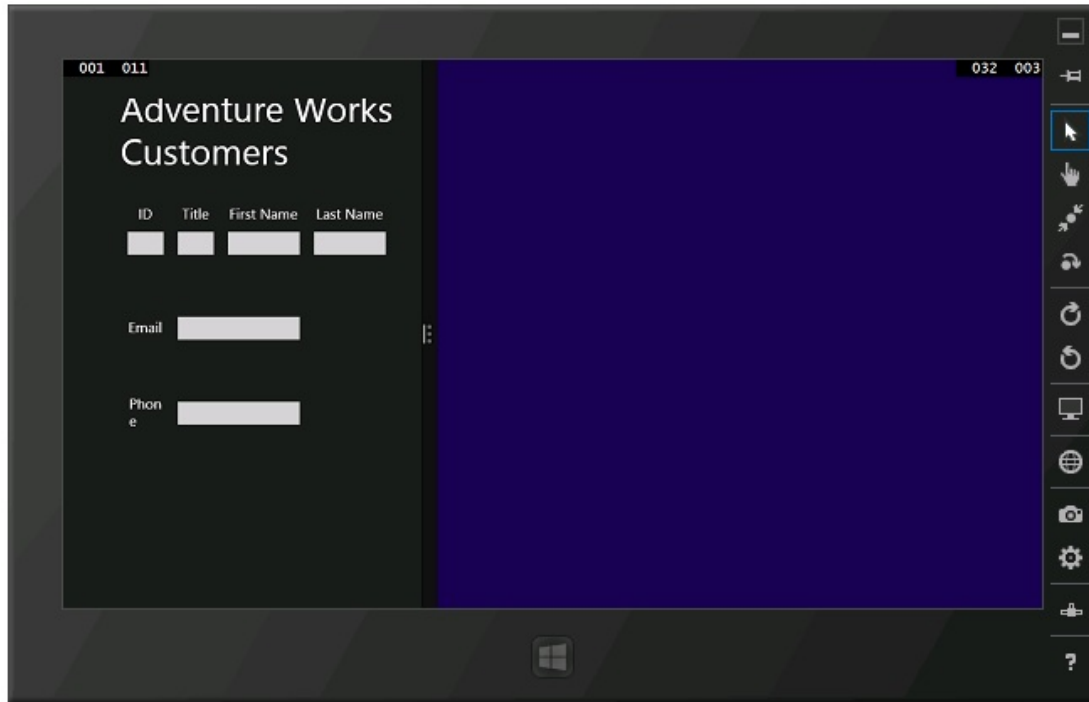
Again, notice how the spacing and size of the controls is adjusted to maintain the even balance of the user interface:



20. Click Change Resolution again and switch the resolution back to  $1366 \times 768$ .

21. Click the top edge of the form and drag it so that the form is displayed in the left half of the screen, and then drag the bar in the middle of the screen to reduce the size of the view to its minimum width (500 pixels).

All of the controls remain visible, but the text for the Phone label wraps, making it difficult to read, and the controls are not particularly easy to use:



22. In the Simulator, display the charms (press Windows+C), click Settings, click Power, and then click Disconnect.

The Simulator closes and you return to Visual Studio.

23. On the Visual Studio toolbar, in the Debug Target list, select Local Machine.

### **Adapting the layout by using the Visual State Manager**

The user interface for the Customers app scales for different resolutions and form factors, but it still does not work well if you reduce the width of the view. Additionally, it probably would not look too good on a smartphone, which has an even narrower width. If you think about it, in these cases the problem is not so much a matter of scaling the controls as actually laying them out in a different way. For example, it would make better sense if the Customers form looked like this in a narrow view:

# Customers

ID

Title

First Name

Last Name

Email

Phone

You can achieve this effect by using the Visual State Manager. All Windows Store apps implement a Visual State Manager that tracks the visual state of an app. It can detect when the app switches between different views. You can catch these visual state transitions and use them to animate the user interface—to move controls around or to display and hide controls, for example. This is what you will do in the next exercises. The first step is to define a layout for the customers' data that should appear in a narrow view.

Define a layout for the narrow view

1. In the XAML pane for the Customers app, add the *x:Name* and *Visibility* properties shown in bold in the following code that defines the tabular layout of the various controls to the *Grid* control:

```
<Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundThemeBrush}">
    <Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" Margin="40,54,0,0"
Visibility="Collapsed">
        ...
    </Grid>
</Grid>
```

You will reference this *Grid* control in other XAML markup later in this set of exercises, hence the requirement to give it a name. The *Visibility* property specifies whether the control is displayed (*Visible*), or hidden (*Collapsed*). The default value is *Visible*, but for the time being you will hide this *Grid* while you define another for displaying the data in a columnar format.

2. After the closing *</Grid>* tag for the *customersTabularView* Grid control, add another *Grid* control. Set the *x:Name* property to *customersColumnarView*, set the *Margin* property to *20,10,20,10*, and set the *Visibility* property to *Visible*.

#### TIP

You can expand and contract elements in the XAML pane of the Design View window and make the structure easier to read by clicking the + and – signs that appear down the left edge of the XAML markup.

```

<Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundThemeBrush}">
    <Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" Margin="40,54,0,0"
    Visibility="Collapsed">
        ...
    </Grid>
    <Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="10,20,10,20"
    Visibility="Visible">
        </Grid>
    </Grid>

```

3. In the *customersColumnarView Grid* control add the following row definitions:

```

<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="10,20,10,20"
    Visibility="Visible">
    <Grid.RowDefinitions>
        <RowDefinition Height=""/>
        <RowDefinition Height="10">
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>
</Grid>

```

You will use the top row to display the title and the second, much larger row to display the controls into which the user enters data.

4. After the row definitions, add the following *TextBlock* control. This control displays a truncated title, Customers, in the first row of the *Grid* control. Set the *FontSize* to 30.

```

<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="10,20,10,20"
    Visibility="Visible">
    <Grid.RowDefinitions>
        ...
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>
    <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center" TextWrapping="Wrap"
    Text="Customers" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="30"/>
</Grid>

```

5. Add another *Grid* control to row 1 of the *customersColumnarView Grid* control, immediately after the *TextBlock* control that contains the Customers title. This *Grid* control will display the labels and data-entry controls in two columns, so add the row and columns definitions shown in

the following code example to this *Grid*.

```
<TextBlock Grid.Row="0" ... />
<Grid Grid.Row="1">
    <Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
        <ColumnDefinition/>
        <ColumnDefinition/>
    </Grid.ColumnDefinitions>
    <Grid.RowDefinitions>
        <RowDefinition/>
        <RowDefinition/>
        <RowDefinition/>
        <RowDefinition/>
    </Grid.RowDefinitions>
</Grid>
```

Notice that if all the rows or columns in a set have the same height or width, you do not need to specify their size.

6. Copy the XAML markup for the ID, Title, First Name, and Last Name *TextBlock* controls from the *customersTabularView Grid* control to the new *Grid* control, immediately after the row definitions that you just added. Put the ID control in row 0, the Title control in row 1, the First Name control in row 2, and the Last Name control in row 3. Place all controls in column 0.

```
<Grid.RowDefinitions>
    ...
</Grid.RowDefinitions>
<TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="ID" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
<TextBlock Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="Title" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
<TextBlock Grid.Row="2" Grid.Column="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="First Name" VerticalAlignment="Center"
FontSize="20"/>
<TextBlock Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="Last Name" VerticalAlignment="Center"
FontSize="20"/>
```

7. Copy the XAML markup for the *id*, *title*, *firstName*, and *lastName* *TextBox* and *ComboBox* controls from the *customersTabularView Grid* control to the new *Grid* control, immediately after the *TextBox* controls. Put the *id* control in row 0, the *title* control in row 1, the *firstName* control in row 2, and the *lastName* control in row 3. Place all four controls in column 1. Also, change the names of all the controls by prefixing them with the letter *c* (for column). This final change is necessary to avoid clashing with the names of the existing controls in the *customersTabularView Grid* control.

```
<TextBlock Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="Last Name" VerticalAlignment="Center"
FontSize="20"/>
<TextBox Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cId"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"
IsReadOnly="True"/>
<TextBox Grid.Row="2" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cFirstName"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
<TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cLastName"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
<ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cTitle"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20">
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Mr"/>
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Mrs">
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Ms">
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Miss">
</ComboBox>
```

8. Copy the *TextBlock* and *TextBox* controls for the email address and telephone number from the *customersTabularView Grid* control to the new *Grid* control, after the *cTitle ComboBox* control. Place the *TextBlock* controls in column 0 and the *TextBox* controls in column 1, in rows 4 and 5. Change the name of the *email TextBox* control to *cEmail* and the name of the *phone TextBox* control to *cPhone*. Remove the *Width* properties of the *cEmail* and *cPhone* controls, and set their *HorizontalAlignment* properties to *Stretch*.

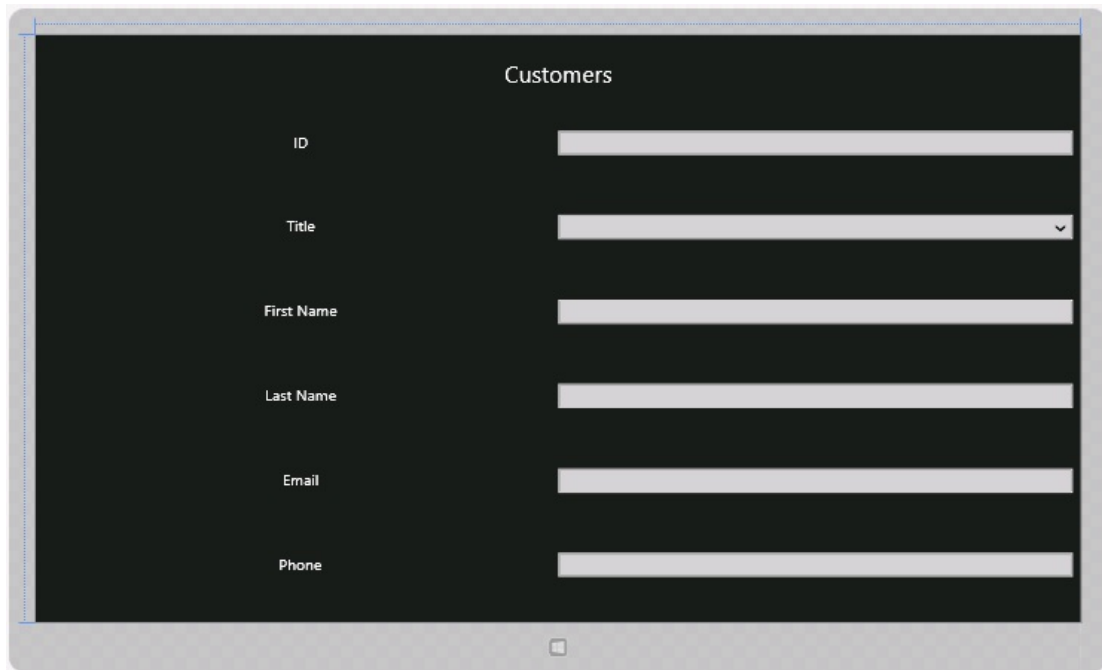
```
<ComboBox ...>
```

```

...
</ComboBox>
<TextBlock Grid.Row="4" Grid.Column="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Email" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
<TextBox Grid.Row="4" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cEmail"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
<TextBlock Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center"
TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Phone" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>
<TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cPhone"
HorizontalAlignment="Stretch"
TextWrapping="Wrap" Text="" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="20"/>

```

The Design View window should display the columnar layout like this:



9. Return to the XAML markup for the *customersTabularView Grid* control and set the *Visibility* property to *Visible*.

```

<Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" Margin="40,54,0,0" Visibility="Visible">

```

10. In the XAML markup for the *customersColumnarView Grid* control, set the *Visibility* property to *Collapsed*.



```
<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="20,10,20,10"
Visibility="Collapsed">
```

The Design View window should display the original tabular layout of the Customers form. This is the default view that will be used by the app.

You have now defined the layout that will appear in the narrow view. You might be concerned that in essence all you have done is duplicated many of the controls and laid them out in a different manner. If you run the form and switch between views, how will data in one view transfer to the other? For example, if you enter the details for a customer when the app is running full screen, and then you switch to the narrow view, the newly displayed controls will not contain the same data that you just entered. Windows Store apps address this problem by using *data binding*. This is a technique by which you can associate the same piece of data to multiple controls, and as the data changes, all controls display the updated information. You will see how this works in [Chapter 26](#). For the time being, you need to consider how to use the Visual State Manager to switch between layouts when the view changes.

Every Windows Store app has a Visual State Manager. Its purpose is to respond to changes in visual state and update the layout of the user interface. To indicate a change in visual state, you can use the *GoToState* method of the *VisualStateManager* object. You can specify the changes that the Visual State Manager makes to the layout by implementing a series of visual state transitions in the XAML markup of your app. This is what you will do in the next exercise. Use the Visual State Manager to modify the layout

1. In the XAML pane for the Customers app, after the closing `</Grid>` tag for the *customersColumnarView Grid* control, add the following markup:

```
<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="10,20,10,20"
Visibility="Visible">
    ...
</Grid>
<VisualStateManager.VisualStateGroups>
    <VisualStateGroup>
        <VisualState x:Name="TabularLayout">
            <VisualStateGroup>
                </VisualStateGroup>
            </VisualStateGroup>
        </VisualStateGroup>
    </VisualStateManager.VisualStateGroups>
```

You define the visual state transitions by implementing one or more visual state groups. Each visual state group specifies the transitions that should occur when the Visual State Manager switches to the specified visual state. In this case, the default actions will occur when the Visual State Manager switches to the *TabularLayout* state (this state will indicate that the app is running in a wide window; you will define this state shortly). You have already experienced these default actions—the controls adjust their widths and positions relative to each other, according to the definitions of the various rows and columns in the *Grid* controls that contain them.

2. Add the following visual state transition shown in bold to the visual state group:

```
<VisualStateManager.VisualStateGroups>
  <VisualStateGroup>
    <VisualState x:Name="TabularLayout"/>
    <VisualState x:Name="ColumnarLayout">
      <Storyboard>
        <ObjectAnimationUsingKeyFrames Storyboard.TargetName=
"customersTabularView" Storyboard.TargetProperty="Visibility">
          <DiscreteObjectKeyFrame KeyTime="0" Value="Collapsed">
</ObjectAnimationUsingKeyFrames>
        <ObjectAnimationUsingKeyFrames Storyboard.TargetName=
"customersColumnarView" Storyboard.TargetProperty="Visibility">
          <DiscreteObjectKeyFrame KeyTime="0" Value="Visible">
</ObjectAnimationUsingKeyFrames>
      </Storyboard>
    </VisualState>
  </VisualStateGroup>
</VisualStateManager.VisualStateGroups>
```

This transition will occur when the app switches to *ColumnarLayout* state, when the user resizes the app to display it in a narrow window (again, you will define this state in a later step in this exercise).

A transition is described in terms of an animation storyboard. Animation in Windows Store apps is a big subject in its own right; unfortunately, there is not space to discuss how animations work in this chapter, but the important point to glean from this code is that this transition contains two animations: the first changes the *Visibility* property of the *customersTabularView Grid*

control to *Collapsed*, and the second changes the *Visibility* property of the *customersColumnarView Grid* control to *Visible*.

#### NOTE

For more information about using animations in Windows Store apps, visit the “Quickstart: Animating your UI” page on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/xaml/hh452703.aspx>.

3. In Solution Explorer, expand *MainPage.xaml*, and then double-click *MainPage.xaml.cs* to display the code for the *MainPage* form in the Code and Text Editor window.
4. Add the following method to the *MainPage* class:

```
void WindowSizeChanged(object sender,
Windows.UI.Core.WindowSizeChangedEventArgs e)
{
    if (e.Size.Width <= 750)
    {
        VisualStateManager.GoToState(this, "ColumnarLayout", false);
    }
    else
    {
        VisualStateManager.GoToState(this, "TabularLayout", false);
    }
}
```

This is an event handler that will run when the app window changes size. The *WindowSizeChangedEventArgs* parameter contains the *Size* property which indicates the new size of the window. The *Width* property specifies the width of the window. The code in this event handler queries the *Width* property, and calls the static *GoToState* method of the *VisualStateManager* class, specifying the state to which the Visual State Manager should transition the window. The *GoToState* method triggers a transition on the object specified by the first argument (in this case, the *Customers* form), using the visual state name specified by the second argument. In this case, if the width of the window is less than 750 pixels, the app switches to the *ColumnarLayout* state, otherwise it moves to the *TabularLayout* state. Note

that state names are simply string values. You can ignore the Boolean third argument.

#### NOTE

The form moves to the columnar layout when the width drops to 750 pixels rather than the 500 pixels that is the default minimum width of a window. This is because at widths below 750 pixels, the controls and labels on the Customers form start to wrap and become difficult to use.

5. In the *MainPage* constructor, add the following statement shown in bold:

```
public MainPage()
{
    this.InitializeComponent();
    Window.Current.SizeChanged += WindowSizeChanged;
}
```

This code subscribes to the *SizeChanged* event for the current window; the *WindowSizeChanged* method that you defined in the previous step runs when this event occurs.

6. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging.

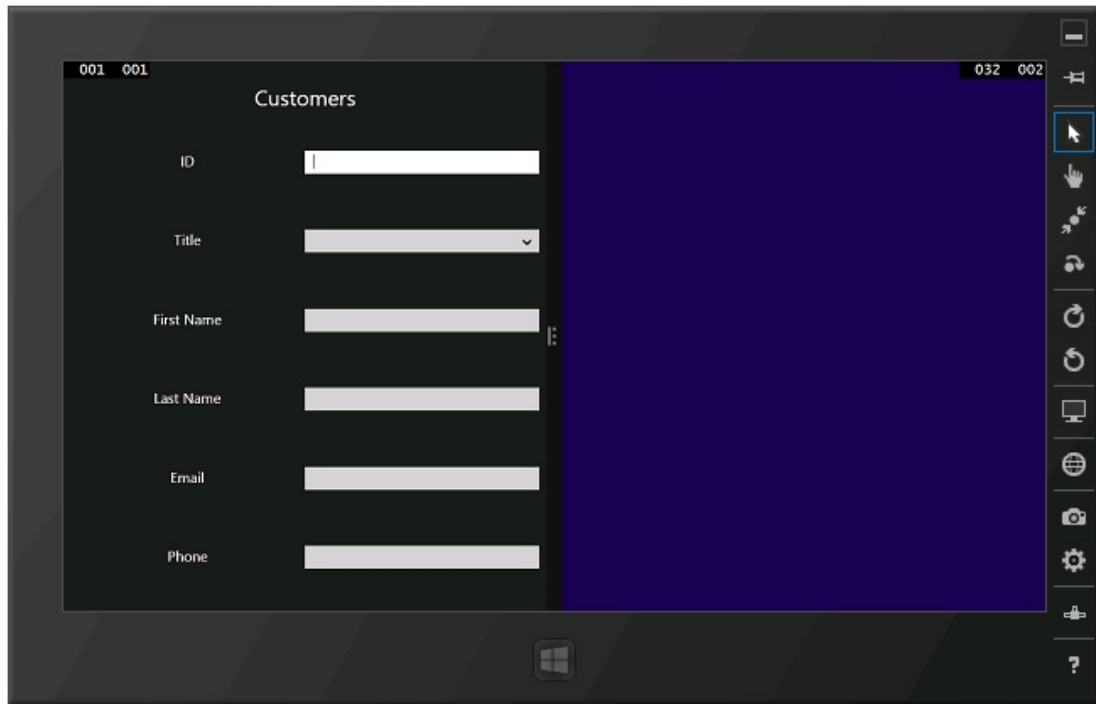
The app starts and displays the Customer form full screen. The data displays using the tabular layout.

#### NOTE

If you are using a display with a resolution of less than  $1366 \times 768$ , start the app running in the Simulator as described earlier. Configure the Simulator with a resolution of  $1366 \times 768$ .

7. Drag the top edge of the window displaying the Customer app to show it in a narrow view.

This time, the data is displayed in the columnar layout:



8. Resize the window displaying the Customer app to display it running full screen.

The Customer form reverts to the tabular layout.

9. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Applying styles to a UI

Now that you have the mechanics of the basic layout of the app resolved, the next step is to apply some styling to make the UI look more attractive. The controls in a Windows Store app have a varied range of properties that you can use to change features such as the font, color, size, and other attributes of an element. You can set these properties individually for each control, but this approach can become cumbersome and repetitive if you need to apply the same styling to a number of controls. Also, the best apps apply a consistent styling across the UI, and it is difficult to maintain this consistency if you have to repeatedly set the same properties and values as you add or change controls. The more times you have to do the same thing, the greater the chances are that you will get it wrong at least once!

With Windows Store apps, you can define reusable styles. You can implement them as app-wide resources by creating a resource dictionary, and then they are available to all controls in all pages in an app. You can also define local resources that apply to only a single page in the XAML markup for that page. In the following exercise, you will define some simple styles for the Customers app and apply these styles to the controls on the Customers form.

Define styles for the Customers form

1. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Customers project, point to Add, and then click New Item.
2. In the Add New Item – Customers dialog box, click Resource Dictionary. In the Name box, type **AppStyles.xaml**, and then click Add.

The AppStyles.xaml file appears in the Code and Text Editor window. A resource dictionary is a XAML file that contains resources that the app can use. The AppStyles.xaml file looks like this:

```
<ResourceDictionary
    xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"
    xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml"
    xmlns:local="using:Customers">
</ResourceDictionary>
```

Styles are one example of a resource, but you can also add other items. In fact, the first resource that you will add is not actually a style but an *ImageBrush* that will be used to paint the background of the outermost *Grid* control on the Customers form.

3. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Customers project, point to Add, and then click New Folder. Change the name of the new folder to **Images**.
4. Right-click the Images folder, point to Add, and then click Existing Item.
5. In the Add Existing Item – Customers dialog box, browse to the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 25\Resources folder in your Documents folder, click wood.jpg, and then click Add.

The wood.jpg file is added to the Images folder in the Customers project. This file contains an image of a tasteful wooden background that you will

add to the Customers form.

6. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the AppStyles.xaml file, add the following XAML markup shown in bold:

```
<ResourceDictionary
    xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"
    xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml"
    xmlns:local="using:Customers">
    <ImageBrush x:Key="WoodBrush" ImageSource="Images/wood.jpg"/>
</ResourceDictionary>
```

This markup creates an *ImageBrush* resource called *WoodBrush* that is based on the wood.jpg file. You can use this image brush to set the background of a control, and it will display the image in the wood.jpg file.

7. Underneath the *ImageBrush* resource, add the following style shown in bold to the AppStyles.xaml file:

```
<ResourceDictionary
    ...>
    <ImageBrush x:Key="WoodBrush" ImageSource="Images/wood.jpg"/>
    <Style x:Key="GridStyle" TargetType="Grid">
        <Setter Property="Background" Value="{StaticResource WoodBrush}">
    </Style>
</ResourceDictionary>
```

This markup shows how to define a style. A *Style* element should have a name (so it can be referenced elsewhere in the app), and it should specify the type of control to which the style can be applied. You are going to use this style with the *Grid* control.

The body of a style consists of one or more *Setter* elements. A *Setter* element specifies the property to set and the value to which the property should be set. In this example, the *Background* property is set to the *WoodBrush ImageBrush* resource. The syntax is a little curious, though. In a value, you can either reference one of the appropriate system-defined values for the property (such as “Red” if you want to set the background to a solid red color) or specify a resource that you have defined. To reference a resource, you use the *StaticResource* keyword and then place the entire

expression in curly braces.

8. Before you can use this style, you must update the global resource dictionary for the app in the App.xaml file and add a reference to the AppStyles.xaml file. In Solution Explorer, double-click App.xaml to display it in the Code and Text Editor window. The App.xaml file looks like this:

```
<Application
  x:Class="Customers.App"
  xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"
  xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml"
  xmlns:local="using:Customers">
</Application>
```

Currently the App.xaml file only defines the *app* object and brings a few namespaces into scope; the global resource dictionary is empty.

9. Add the code shown here in bold to the App.xaml file:

```
<Application
  x:Class="Customers.App"
  xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"
  xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml"
  xmlns:local="using:Customers">
  <Application.Resources>
    <ResourceDictionary>
      <ResourceDictionary.MergedDictionaries>
        <ResourceDictionary Source="AppStyles.xaml"/>
      </ResourceDictionary.MergedDictionaries>
    </ResourceDictionary>
  </Application.Resources>
</Application>
```

This markup adds the resources defined in the AppStyles.xaml file to the list of resources available in the global resource dictionary. These resources are now available for use throughout the app.

10. Switch to the MainPage.xaml file displaying the UI for the Customers form. In the XAML pane, find the outermost *Grid* control:

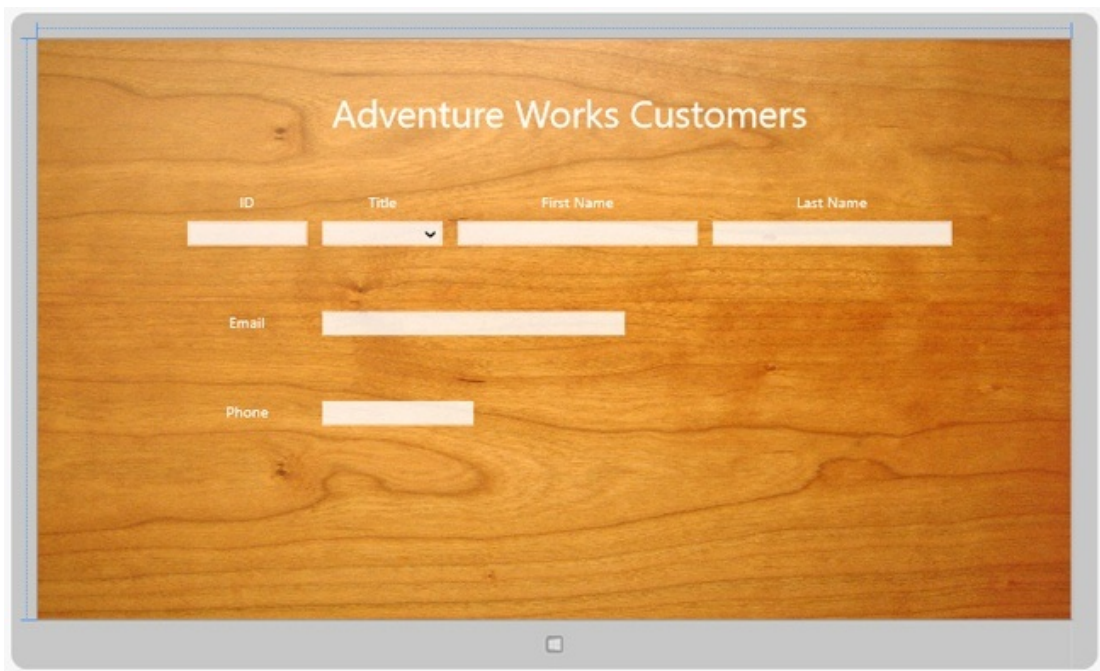


```
<Grid Background="{StaticResource ApplicationPageBackgroundThemeBrush}">
```

In the XAML markup for this control, replace the *Background* property with a *Style* property that references the *GridStyle* style, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
<Grid Style="{StaticResource GridStyle}">
```

The background of the *Grid* control in the Design View window should switch and display a wooden panel, like this:



#### NOTE

Ideally, you should ensure that any background image that you apply to a page or control maintains its aesthetics as the device form factor and orientation changes. An image that looks cool on a 30-inch monitor might appear distorted and squashed on a Windows Phone device. It might be necessary to provide alternative backgrounds for different views and orientations and use the Visual State Manager to modify the *Background* property of a control to switch between them as the visual state changes.

11. Return to AppStyles.xaml in the Code and Text Editor window and add the following *FontStyle* style after the *GridStyle* style:

```

<Style x:Key="GridStyle" TargetType="Grid">
    ...
</Style>
<Style x:Key="FontStyle" TargetType="TextBlock">
    <Setter Property="FontFamily" Value="Buxton Sketch">
<Style>

```

This style applies to *TextBlock* elements and changes the font to Buxton Sketch. This font resembles a handwriting style.

At this stage, it would be possible to reference the *FontStyle* style in every *TextBlock* control that required this font, but this approach would not provide any advantage over simply setting the *FontFamily* directly in the markup for each control. The real power of styles occurs when you combine multiple properties together, as you will see in the next few steps.

12. Add the *HeaderStyle* style shown here to the AppStyles.xaml file:

```

<Style x:Key="FontStyle" TargetType="TextBlock">
    ...
</Style>
<Style x:Key="HeaderStyle" TargetType="TextBlock" BasedOn="{StaticResource
FontStyle}">
    <Setter Property="HorizontalAlignment" Value="Center">
    <Setter Property="TextWrapping" Value="Wrap">
    <Setter Property="VerticalAlignment" Value="Center"/>
    <Setter Property="Foreground" Value="SteelBlue">
<Style>

```

This is a composite style that sets the *HorizontalAlignment*, *TextWrapping*, *VerticalAlignment*, and *Foreground* properties of a *TextBlock*.

Additionally, the *HeaderStyle* style references the *FontStyle* style by using the *BasedOn* property. The *BasedOn* property provides a simple form of inheritance for styles.

You will use this style to format the labels that appear at the top of the *customersTabularGrid* and *customersColumnarGrid* controls. However, these headings have different font sizes (the heading for the tabular layout is bigger than that of the columnar layout), so you will create two more styles that extend the *HeaderStyle* style.

13. Add the following styles to the AppStyles.xaml file:

```
<Style x:Key="HeaderStyle" TargetType="TextBlock" BasedOn="{StaticResource
FontStyle}">
    ...
</Style>
<Style x:Key="TabularHeaderStyle" TargetType="TextBlock"
BasedOn="{StaticResource HeaderStyle}">
    <Setter Property="FontSize" Value="70">
<Style>
<Style x:Key="ColumnarHeaderStyle" TargetType="TextBlock"
BasedOn="{StaticResource HeaderStyle}">
    <Setter Property="FontSize" Value="50">
<Style>
```

Note that the font sizes for these styles are slightly bigger than the font sizes currently used by the headings in the *Grid* controls. This is because the Buxton Sketch font is smaller than the default font.

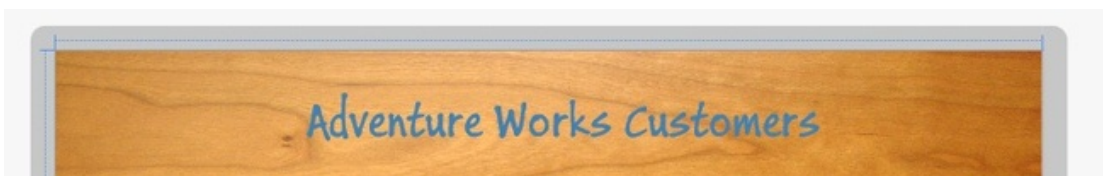
14. Switch back to the MainPage.xaml file and find the XAML markup for the *TextBlock* control for the Adventure Works Customers label in the *customersTabularView Grid* control:

```
<TextBlock Grid.Row="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Adventure Works Customers" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="50"/>
```

15. Change the properties of this control to reference the *TabularHeaderStyle* style, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
<TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Style="{StaticResource TabularHeaderStyle}"
Text="Adventure Works Customers"/>
```

The heading displayed in the Design View window should change color, size, and font and look like this:



16. Find the XAML markup for the *TextBlock* control for the Customers label

in the *customersColumnarView Grid* control:

```
<TextBlock Grid.Row="0" HorizontalAlignment="Center" TextWrapping="Wrap"
Text="Customers" VerticalAlignment="Center" FontSize="30"/>
```

Modify the markup of this control to reference the *ColumnarHeaderStyle* style, as shown here in bold:

```
<TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Style="{StaticResource ColumnarHeaderStyle}"
Text="Customers"/>
```

Be aware that you won't see this change in the Design View window, because the *customersColumnarView Grid* control is collapsed by default. However, you will see the effects of this change when you run the app later in this exercise.

17. Return to the AppStyles.xaml file in the Code and Text Editor window. Modify the *HeaderStyle* style with the additional property *Setter* elements shown in bold in the following example:

```
<Style x:Key="HeaderStyle" TargetType="TextBlock" BasedOn="{StaticResource
FontStyle}">
    <Setter Property="HorizontalAlignment" Value="Center">
    <Setter Property="TextWrapping" Value="Wrap">
    <Setter Property="VerticalAlignment" Value="Center">
    <Setter Property="Foreground" Value="SteelBlue">
    <Setter Property="RenderTransformOrigin" Value="0.5,0.5">
    <Setter Property="RenderTransform">
        <Setter.Value>
            <CompositeTransform Rotation="-5">
        </Setter.Value>
    </Setter>
</Style>
```

These elements rotate the text displayed in the header about its midpoint by an angle of 5 degrees by using a transformation.

#### NOTE

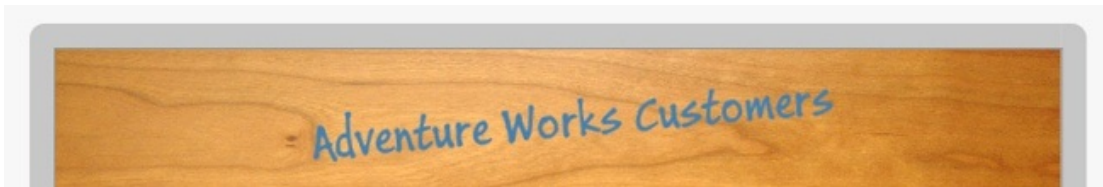
This example shows a simple transformation. Using the *RenderTransform* property, you can perform a variety of other transformations to an item, and you can combine

multiple transformations together. For example, you can translate (move) an item on the x and y-axes, skew the item (make it lean), and scale an element. For more information, see

<http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/system.windows.uielement.rendertransform.aspx>.

You should also notice that the value of the *RenderTransform* property is itself another property/value pair (the property is *Rotation*, and the value is  $-5$ ). In cases such as this, you specify the value by using the `<Setter.Value>` tag.

18. Switch to the `MainPage.xaml` file. In the Design View window, the title should now be displayed at a jaunty angle:



19. In the `AppStyles.xaml` file, add the following style:

```
<Style x:Key="LabelStyle" TargetType="TextBlock" BasedOn="{StaticResource
FontStyle}">
    <Setter Property="FontSize" Value="30"/>
    <Setter Property="HorizontalAlignment" Value="Center">
    <Setter Property="TextWrapping" Value="Wrap">
    <Setter Property="VerticalAlignment" Value="Center"/>
    <Setter Property="Foreground" Value="AntiqueWhite">
</Style>
```

You will apply this style to the *TextBlock* elements that provide the labels for the various *TextBox* and *ComboBox* controls that the user employs to enter customer information. The style references the same font style as the headings but sets the other properties to values more appropriate for the labels.

20. Go back to the `MainPage.xaml` file. In the XAML pane, modify the markup for the *TextBlock* controls for each of the labels in the *customersTabularView* and *customersColumnarView Grid* controls; remove the *HorizontalAlignment*, *TextWrapping*, *VerticalAlignment*, and *FontSize* properties; and reference the *LabelStyle* style, as shown here in bold:

```

<Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" Margin="40,54,0,0" Visibility="Visible">
    ...
    <Grid Grid.Row="2">
        ...
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="1" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="ID"/>
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="3" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="Title"/>
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="5" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="First Name"/>
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="7" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="Last Name"/>
        ...
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="1" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="Email"/>
        ...
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="1" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="Phone"/>
        ...
    </Grid>
</Grid>
<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="20,10,20,10"
Visibility="Collapsed">
    ...
    <Grid Grid.Row="1">
        ...
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="0" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="ID"/>
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="0" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="Title"/>
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="2" Grid.Column="0" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="First Name"/>
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="0" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="Last Name"/>
        ...
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="4" Grid.Column="0" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"

```

```

Text="Email"/>
...
<TextBlock Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="0" Style="{StaticResource
LabelStyle}"
Text="Phone"/>
...
</Grid>
</Grid>

```

The labels on the form should change to the Buxton Sketch font and display in white, in a font size of 30 points:



21. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app.

#### NOTE

Use the Simulator if you are running on a display with a resolution less than 1366 × 768.

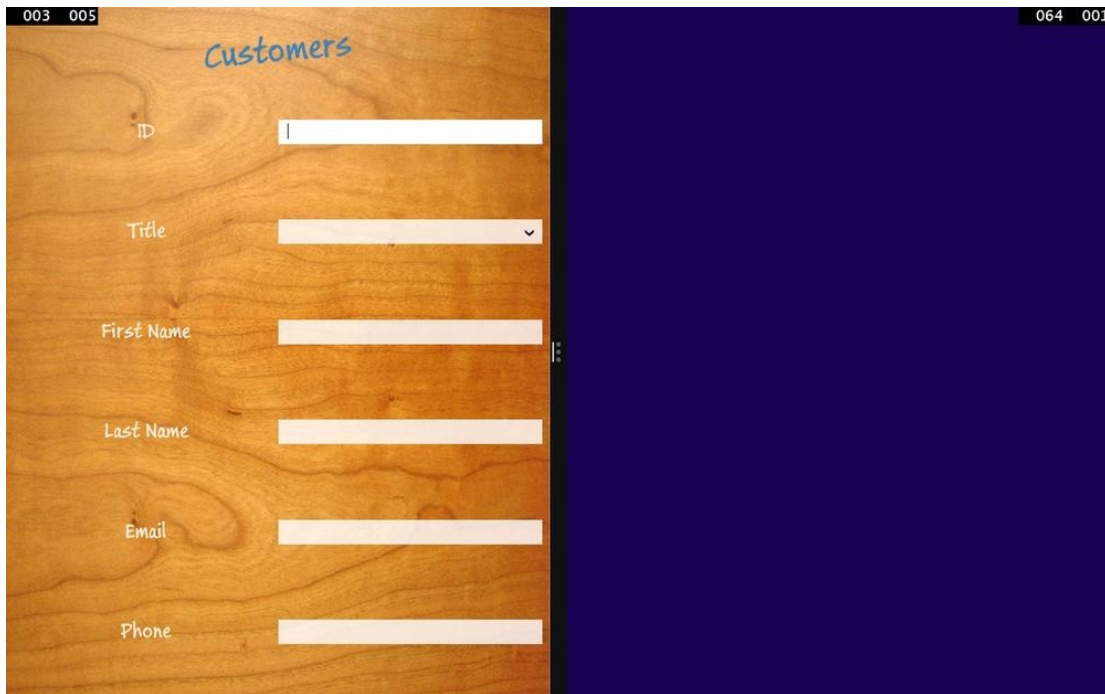
The Customers form should appear and be styled in the same way that it appears in the Design View window in Visual Studio. Notice that if you enter any text into the various fields on the form, they use the default font and styling for the *TextBox* controls.



#### NOTE

Although the Buxton Sketch font is good for labels and titles, it is not recommended as a font for data entry fields, because some of the characters can be difficult to distinguish from one another. For example, the lowercase letter *l* is very similar to the digit 1, and the uppercase letter *O* is almost indistinguishable from the digit 0. For this reason, it makes sense to stick with the default font for the *TextBox* controls.

22. Click the top edge of the form and drag it so that the form is displayed in the left half of the screen and verify that the styling has been applied to the controls in the *customersColumnarView* grid. The form should look like this:



23. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

You can see that by using styles you can easily implement a number of really cool effects. In addition, careful use of styles makes your code much more maintainable than setting properties on individual controls. For example, if you want to switch the font used by the labels and headings in the Customers app, you need to make only a single change to the *FontStyle* style. In general, you should use styles wherever possible; besides assisting maintainability, use of styles helps to keep the XAML markup for your forms clean and uncluttered,



and the XAML for a form only needs to specify the controls and layout, rather than how the controls should appear on the form.

#### NOTE

You can also use Microsoft Blend for Visual Studio 2013 to define complex styles that you can integrate into an app. Professional graphics artists can use Blend to develop custom styles and provide these styles in the form of XAML markup to developers building apps. All the developer has to do is add *Style* tags to the user interface elements to reference the appropriate styles.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to use the *Grid* control to implement a user interface that can scale to different device form factors and orientations. You also learned how to use the Visual State Manager to adapt the layout of controls when the user changes the size of the window displaying the app. Finally, you learned how to create custom styles and apply them to the controls on a form. Now that you have defined the user interface, the next challenge is to add functionality to the app, enabling the user to display and update data, which is what you will do in the final chapter.

- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to [Chapter 26](#).
- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

| To   | Do this  |
|--|--|
| Create a new Windows Store app   | Use one of the Windows Store templates in Visual Studio 2013, such as the Blank App template.  |
| Implement a user interface that scales to different device form factors and orientations | Use a <i>Grid</i> control. Divide the <i>Grid</i> control into rows and columns, and place controls in these rows and columns rather than specifying an absolute location relative to the edges of the <i>Grid</i> . |
|  |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Implement a user interface that can adapt to different display widths | Create different layouts for each view that display the controls in an appropriate manner. Use the Visual State Manager to select the layout to display when the visual state changes.   |
| Create custom styles  | <p>Add a resource dictionary to the app. Define styles in this dictionary by using the &lt;Style&gt; element, and specify the properties that each style changes. For example:</p> <pre> &lt;Style x:Key="GridStyle" TargetType="Grid"&gt;     &lt;Setter Property="Background" Value="{StaticResource WoodBrush}"&gt; &lt;/Style&gt; </pre> |
| Apply a custom style to a control                                     | <p>Set the Style property of the control and reference the style by name. For example:</p> <pre> &lt;Grid Style="{StaticResource GridStyle}"&gt; </pre>  |

# Chapter 26. Displaying and searching for data in a Windows Store app

---

After completing the chapter, you will be able to:

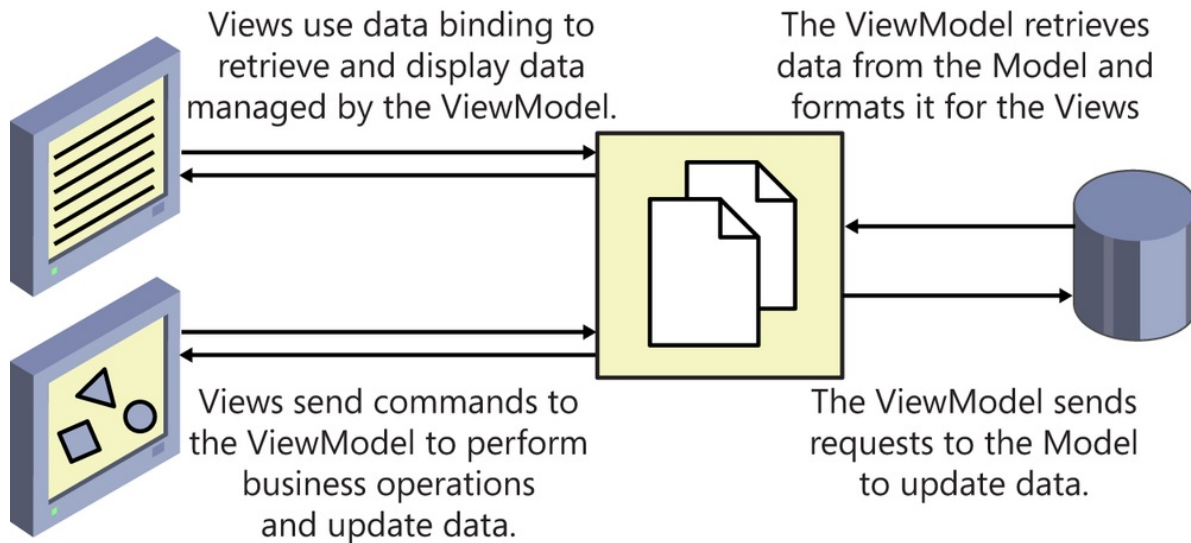
- Implementing the Model-View-ViewModel pattern
- Displaying data by using data binding
- Creating a ViewModel
- Implementing the Search contract

**Chapter 25** demonstrates how to design a user interface (UI) for a Microsoft Windows Store app that could adapt to the different device form factors, orientations, and views that a customer running your app might use. The app that is developed in that chapter is a simple one for displaying and editing the details of customers.

In this chapter, you will see how to display data in the UI and the features that Microsoft Windows 8.1 provides with which you can search for data in an app. In performing these tasks, you will also learn about the way in which you can structure a Windows Store app. This chapter covers a lot of ground; in particular, you will look at how to use data-binding to connect the UI to the data that it displays and how to create a ViewModel that makes it possible for you to separate the user interface logic from the data model and business logic for an app. You will also see how to use contracts to implement a search feature that integrates into the Windows 8.1 operating system. While building this application, you will learn a lot more about the templates that Microsoft Visual Studio 2013 provides for helping you to build Windows Store apps.

## Implementing the Model-View-ViewModel pattern

A well-structured Windows Store app separates the design of the user interface from the data that the application uses and the business logic that comprises the functionality of the app. This separation helps to remove the dependencies between the various components, clearing the way for the different elements to be designed and implemented by individuals who have the appropriate specialist skills. For example, a graphic artist can focus attention on designing an appealing and intuitive UI, a database specialist can concentrate on implementing an optimized set of data structures for storing and accessing the data, and a C# developer can direct her efforts toward implementing the business logic for the app. This is a common goal that has been the aim of many development approaches, not just for Windows Store apps, and over the past few years many techniques have been devised to help structure an app in this way. Arguably, the most popular approach is to follow the Model-View-ViewModel (MVVM) design pattern. In this design pattern, the model provides the data used by the app, the view represents the way in which the data is displayed in the UI, and the ViewModel contains the logic that connects the two, taking the user input and converting it into commands that perform business operations on the model, and also taking the data from the model and formatting it in the manner expected by the view. The following diagram shows a simplified relationship between the elements of the MVVM pattern. Note that an app might provide multiple views of the same data. In a Windows Store app, for example, you might implement different view states, which can present information by using different screen layouts. One job of the ViewModel is to ensure that the data from the same model can be displayed and manipulated by many different views. In a Windows Store app, the view can configure data-binding to connect to the data presented by the ViewModel. Additionally, the view can request that the ViewModel update data in the model or perform business tasks by invoking commands implemented by the ViewModel.



## Displaying data by using data binding

Before you get started implementing a ViewModel for the Customers app, it helps to understand a little more about data binding and how you can apply this technique to display data in a UI. Using data binding, you can link a property of a control to a property of an object; if the value of the specified property of the object changes, the property in the control that links to the object also changes. In addition, data-binding can be bidirectional: if the value of a property in a control that uses data binding changes, the modification is propagated to the object to which it is linked. The following exercise provides a quick introduction to using data-binding to display data. It is based on the Customers app from [Chapter 25](#).

Use data-binding to display Customer information

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. Open the Customers project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 26\Data Binding folder in your Documents folder. This is a version of the Customers app developed in [Chapter 25](#), but the layout of the UI has been modified slightly—the controls are displayed on a blue background, which makes them stand out more easily.

NOTE

The blue background was created by using a *Rectangle* control that spans the same rows and columns as the *TextBlock* and *TextBox* controls that display the headings and data. The rectangle is filled by using a *LinearGradientBrush* that gradually changes the color of the rectangle from a medium blue at the top to a very dark blue at the bottom. The XAML markup for the *Rectangle* control displayed in the customersTabularView Grid control views looks like this (the XAML markup for the customersColumnarView Grid control includes a similar *Rectangle* control, spanning the rows and columns used by that layout):

```
<Rectangle Grid.Row="0" Grid.RowSpan="6" Grid.Column="1"
Grid.ColumnSpan="7" ...>
    <Rectangle.Fill>
        <LinearGradientBrush EndPoint="0.5,1" StartPoint="0.5,0">
            <GradientStop Color="#FF0E3895">
            <GradientStop Color="#FF141415" Offset="0.929">
        </LinearGradientBrush>
    </Rectangle.Fill>
</Rectangle>
```

3. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Customers project, select Add, and then click Class.
4. In the Add New Items – Customers dialog box, ensure that the Class template is selected, in the Name box type **Customer.cs**, and then click Add.

You will use this class to implement the *Customer* data type, and then implement data-binding to display the details of *Customer* objects in the UI.

5. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the Customer.cs file, make the *Customer* class public, and add the following private fields and properties shown in bold to the *Customer* class:

```
public class Customer
{
    public int customerID;
    public int CustomerID
    {
        get { return this.customerID; }
        set { this._customerID = value; }
    }
}
```

```

public string title;
public string Title
{
    get { return this.title; }
    set { this._title = value; }
}
public string firstName;
public string FirstName
{
    get { return this.firstName; }
    set { this._firstName = value; }
}
public string lastName;
public string LastName
{
    get { return this.lastName; }
    set { this._lastName = value; }
}
public string emailAddress;
public string EmailAddress
{
    get { return this.emailAddress; }
    set { this._emailAddress = value; }
}
public string phone;
public string Phone
{
    get { return this.phone; }
    set { this._phone = value; }
}
}

```

#### NOTE

You might be wondering why these properties are not implemented as automatic properties because all they do is get and set the value in a private field. You will add additional code to these properties in a later exercise.

6. In Solution Explorer, in the Customers project, double-click the MainPage.xaml file to display the user interface for the application in the Design View window.
7. In the XAML pane, locate the markup for the *id TextBox* control. Modify

the XAML markup that sets the *Text* property for this control, as shown here in bold:

```
<TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="id" ...  
Text="{Binding CustomerID}" .../>
```

The syntax *Text="{Binding Path}"* specifies that the value of the *Text* property will be provided by the value of the *Path* expression at run time. In this case, *Path* is set to *CustomerID*, so the value held in the *CustomerID* expression will be displayed by this control. However, you need to provide a bit more information to indicate that *CustomerID* is actually a property of a *Customer* object. To do this, you can set the *DataContext* property of the control, which you will do shortly.

8. Add the following binding expressions for each of the other text controls on the form. Apply data-binding to the *TextBox* controls in the *customersTabularView* and *customersColumnView Grid* controls, as shown in bold in the following code (the *ComboBox* controls require slightly different handling, which you will address in the section **Using data-binding with a *ComboBox* control** later in this chapter):

```
<Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" ...>  
    ...  
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="id" ...  
    Text="{Binding CustomerID}" .../>  
    ...  
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="5" x:Name="firstName" ...  
    Text="{Binding FirstName}" .../>  
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="7" x:Name="lastName" ...  
    Text="{Binding LastName}" .../>  
    ...  
    <TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="3" Grid.ColumnSpan="3"  
    x:Name="email" ... Text="{Binding EmailAddress}" .../>  
    ...  
    <TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="3" Grid.ColumnSpan="3"  
    x:Name="phone" ... Text="{Binding Phone}" ...>  
</Grid>  
<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="20,10,20,110"  
    Visibility="Collapsed">  
    ...  
    <TextBox Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cId" ...
```



```

Text="{Binding CustomerID}" .../>
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="2" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cFirstName" ...
Text="{Binding FirstName}" .../>
<TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cLastName" ...
Text="{Binding LastName}" .../>
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="4" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cEmail" ...
Text="{Binding EmailAddress}" .../>
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cPhone" ...
Text="{Binding Phone}" .../>
</Grid>

```

9. In Solution Explorer, expand the MainPage.xaml file, and then double-click the MainPage.xaml.cs file to display the code for the MainPage.xaml form in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the statement shown in the following code in bold to the *MainPage* constructor.

```

public MainPage()
{
    this.InitializeComponent();
    Window.Current.SizeChanged += WindowSizeChanged;
    Customer customer = new Customer
    {
        CustomerID = 1,
        Title = "Mr",
        FirstName = "John",
        LastName = "Sharp",
        EmailAddress = "john@contoso.com",
        Phone = "111-1111"
    };
}

```

This code creates a new instance of the *Customer* class and populates it with some sample data.

10. After the code that creates the new *Customer* object, add the following statement shown in bold:

```

Customer customer = new Customer
{
    ...

```

```
};  
this.DataContext = customer;
```

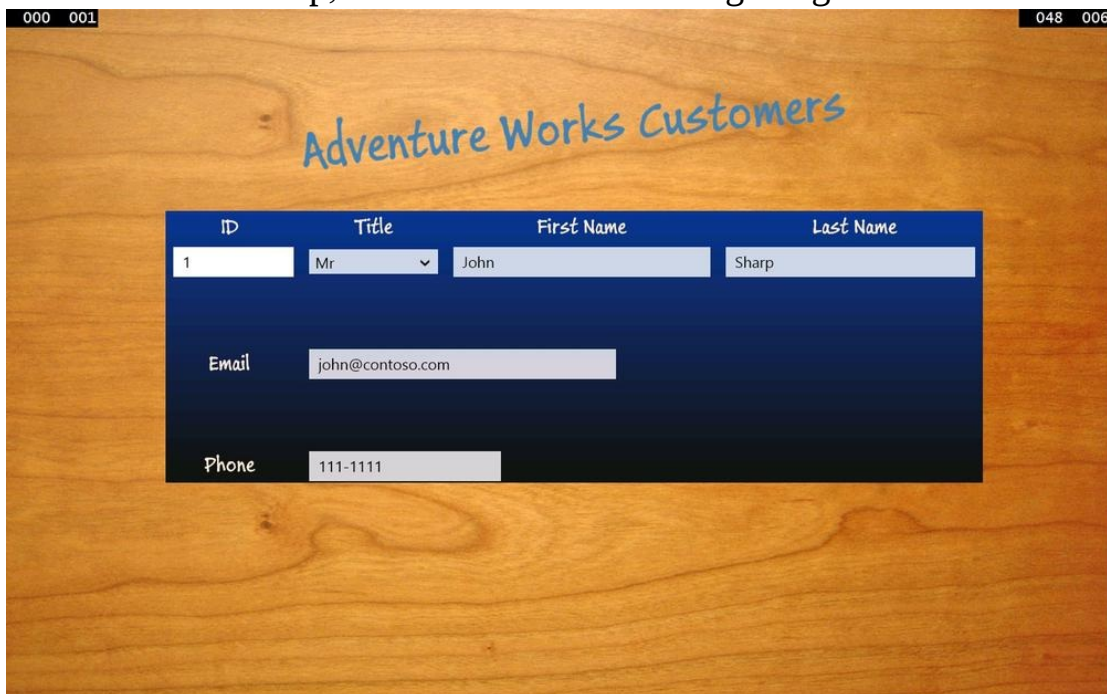
This statement specifies the object to which controls on the MainPage form should bind. In each of the controls, the XAML markup *Text="{Binding Path}"* will be resolved against this object. For example, the *id TextBox* and *cId TextBox* controls both specify *Text="{Binding CustomerID}"*, and so they will display the value found in the *CustomerID* property of the *Customer* object to which the form is bound.

#### NOTE

In this example, you have set the *DataContext* property of the form, so the same data-binding automatically applies to all the controls on the form. You can also set the *DataContext* property for individual controls if you need to bind the different controls to different objects.

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app.

Verify that the form occupies the full screen and displays the details for the customer John Sharp, as shown in the following image:



- Resize the app window and display it in the narrow view. Verify that it

displays the same data, as illustrated here:

000 000

Customers

ID 1

Title Mr

First Name John

Last Name Sharp

Email john@contoso.com

Phone 111-1111

051 002

The controls displayed in the narrow view are bound to the same data as the controls displayed in the full-screen view.

- In the narrow view, change the email address to **john@treyresearch.com**.
- Expand the app window to occupy the full screen.

Notice that the email address displayed in this view has not changed.

- Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.
- In Visual Studio, display the code for the Customer class in the Code and Text Editor window and set a breakpoint in the set property accessor for the *EmailAddress* property.
- On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application again.
- When the debugger reaches the breakpoint for the first time, press F5 to continue running the app.
- When the UI for the Customers app appears, resize the application window to display the narrow view and change the email address to **john@treyresearch.com**.

- Expand the app window back to full-screen view.

Notice that the debugger does not reach the breakpoint in the set accessor for the *EmailAddress* property; the updated value is not written back to the *Customer* object when the email *TextBox* loses the focus.

- Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.
- Remove the breakpoint in the set accessor of the *EmailAddress* property in the *Customer* class.

## Modifying data by using data binding

In the previous exercise, you saw how easy it is to display the data in an object by using data binding. However, by default, data-binding is a one-way operation, and any changes you make to the displayed data are not copied back to the data source. In the exercise, you saw this when you changed the email address displayed in the narrow view; when you switched back to the full-screen view, the data had not changed. You can implement bidirectional data-binding by modifying the *Mode* parameter of the *Binding* specification in the XAML markup for a control. The *Mode* parameter indicates whether the data-binding is one-way (the default) or two-way. This is what you will do next.

Implement *TwoWay* data binding to modify Customer information

1. Display the *MainPage.xaml* file in the Design View window and modify the XAML markup for each of the *TextBox* controls, as shown in bold in the following code:

```
<Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" ...>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="id" ...
Text="{Binding CustomerID, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="5" x:Name="firstName" ...
Text="{Binding FirstName, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="7" x:Name="lastName" ...
Text="{Binding LastName, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="3" Grid.ColumnSpan="3"
x:Name="email" ... Text="{Binding EmailAddress, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="3" Grid.ColumnSpan="3"
x:Name="phone" ... Text="{Binding Phone, Mode=TwoWay}" ...">
```

```

<Grid>
<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="20,10,20,110" ...>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cId" ...
Text="{Binding CustomerID, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="2" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cFirstName" ...
Text="{Binding FirstName, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cLastName" ...
Text="{Binding LastName, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="4" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cEmail" ...
Text="{Binding EmailAddress, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cPhone" ...
Text="{Binding Phone, Mode=TwoWay}" ...>
</Grid>

```

The *Mode* parameter to the *Binding* specification indicates whether the data-binding is one-way (the default) or two-way. Setting *Mode* to *TwoWay* causes any changes made by the user to be passed back to the object to which a control is bound.

2. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app again.
3. While the app is displayed in the full-screen view, change the email address to **john@treymresearch.com**, and then resize the window to display the app in the narrow view.

Notice that, despite changing the data-binding to *TwoWay* mode, the email address displayed in the narrow view has not been updated—it is still *john@contoso.com*.

4. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

Clearly, something is not working correctly! The problem now is not that the data has not been updated, but rather that the view is not displaying the latest version of the data (if you reinstate the breakpoint in the set accessor for the *EmailAddress* property of the *Customer* class again and run the app in the debugger, you will see the debugger reach the breakpoint whenever you change the value of the email address and move the focus away from the *TextBox*

control). Despite appearances, the data-binding process is not magic, and a data-binding does not know when the data to which it is bound has been changed; the object needs to inform the data-binding of any modifications by sending a *PropertyChanged* event to the UI. This event is part of an interface called *INotifyPropertyChanged*, and all objects that support two-way data-binding should implement this interface. You will implement this interface in the next exercise.

Implement the *INotifyPropertyChanged* interface in the *Customer* class

1. In Visual Studio, display the *Customer.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using System.ComponentModel;
```

The *INotifyPropertyChanged* interface is defined in this namespace.

3. Modify the definition of the *Customer* class to specify that it implements the *INotifyPropertyChanged* interface, as follows in bold:

```
class Customer : INotifyPropertyChanged
```

4. Add the *PropertyChanged* event shown in bold in the following code to the *Customer* class, after the *Phone* property:

```
class Customer : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public string phone;
    public string Phone {
        get { return this.phone; }
        set { this._phone = value; }
    }
    public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;
}
```

This is the only item that the *INotifyPropertyChanged* interface defines. All objects that implement this interface must provide this event, and they should raise this event whenever they wish to notify the outside world of a

change to a property value.

5. Add the following method to the *Customer* class, after the *PropertyChanged* event:

```
class Customer : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;
    protected virtual void OnPropertyChanged(string propertyName)
    {
        if (PropertyChanged != null)
        {
            PropertyChanged(this,
                new PropertyChangedEventArgs(propertyName));
        }
    }
}
```

The *OnPropertyChanged* method raises the *PropertyChanged* event. The *PropertyChangedEventArgs* parameter to the *PropertyChanged* event should specify the name of the property that has changed. This value is passed in as a parameter to the *OnPropertyChanged* method.

6. Modify the property set accessors for each of the properties in the *Customer* class to call the *OnPropertyChanged* method whenever the value that they contain is modified, as shown in bold here:

```
class Customer : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    public int customerID;
    public int CustomerID
    {
        get { return this.customerID; }
        set
        {
            this._customerID = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("CustomerID");
        }
    }
    public string title;
    public string Title
    {
```

```

        get { return this.title; }
        set
        {
            this._title = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("Title");
        }
    }
    public string firstName;
    public string FirstName
    {
        get { return this.firstName; }
        set
        {
            this._firstName = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("FirstName");
        }
    }
    public string lastName;
    public string LastName
    {
        get { return this.lastName; }
        set
        {
            this._lastName = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("LastName");
        }
    }
    public string emailAddress;
    public string EmailAddress
    {
        get { return this.emailAddress; }
        set
        {
            this._emailAddress = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("EmailAddress");
        }
    }
    public string phone;
    public string Phone
    {
        get { return this.phone; }
        set
        {
            this._phone = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("Phone");
        }
    }
}

```



```
    ...  
}
```

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app again.
8. When the Customers form appears, change the email address to **john@treyresearch.com**, and change the phone number to **222-2222**.
9. Resize the window to display the app in the narrow view and verify that the email address and phone number have changed.
10. Change the first name to **James**, expand the window to display the full-screen view, and verify that the first name has changed.
11. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Using data-binding with a *ComboBox* control

Using data-binding with a control such as a *TextBox* or *TextBlock* is a relatively straightforward matter. On the other hand, *ComboBox* controls require a little more attention. The issue is that a *ComboBox* control actually displays two things: a list of values in the drop-down list from which the user can select an item, and the value of the currently selected item. You can implement data-binding to display a list of items in the drop-down list of a *ComboBox* control, and the value that the user selects must be a member of this list. In the Customers app, you can configure the data binding for the selected value in the *title ComboBox* control by setting the *SelectedValue* property, like this:

```
<ComboBox ... x:Name="title" ... SelectedValue="{Binding Title}" ... />
```

However, remember that the list of values for the drop-down list is hard-coded into the XAML markup, like this:

```
<ComboBox ... x:Name="title" ... >  
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Mr"/>  
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Mrs">  
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Ms">  
    <ComboBoxItem Content="Miss">  
</ComboBox>
```

This markup is not applied until the control has been created, so the value specified by the data-binding is not found in the list because the list does not yet exist when the data-binding is constructed. The result is that the value is not displayed. You can try this if you like—configure the binding for the *SelectedValue* property as just shown and run the app. The *title ComboBox* will be empty when it is initially displayed, despite the fact that the customer has the title of Mr.

There are several solutions to this problem, but the simplest is to create a data source that contains the list of valid values, and then specify that the *ComboBox* control should use this list as its set of values for the drop-down. You also need to do this before the data-binding for the *ComboBox* is applied.

Implement data-binding for the *title ComboBox* controls

1. In Visual Studio, display the MainPage.xaml.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add the following code shown in bold to the *MainPage* constructor:

```
public MainPage()
{
    this.InitializeComponent();
    Window.Current.SizeChanged += WindowSizeChanged;
    List<string> titles = new List<string>
    {
        "Mr", "Mrs", "Ms", "Miss"
    };
    this.title.ItemsSource = titles;
    this.cTitle.ItemsSource = titles;
    Customer customer = new Customer
    {
        ...
    };
    this.DataContext = customer;
}
```

This code creates a list of strings containing the valid titles that customers can have. The code then sets the *ItemsSource* property of both *title ComboBox* controls to reference this list (remember that there is a *ComboBox* control for each view).

#### NOTE

In a commercial app, you would most likely retrieve the list of values displayed by a *ComboBox* control from a database or some other data source rather than using a hard-coded list, as shown in this example.

The placement of this code is important. It must run before the statement that sets the *DataContext* property of the *MainPage* form because this is when the data-binding to the controls on the form occurs.

3. Display the *MainPage.xaml* file in the Design View window.
4. Modify the XAML markup for the *title* and *cTitle* *ComboBox* controls, as shown here in bold:

```
<Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" ...>
    ...
    <ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="3" x:Name="title" ...
SelectedValue="{Binding Title, Mode=TwoWay}">
    </ComboBox>
    ...
</Grid>
<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" ...>
    ...
    <ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cTitle" ...
SelectedValue="{Binding Title, Mode=TwoWay}">
    </ComboBox>
    ...
</Grid>
```

Notice that the list of *ComboBoxItem* elements for each control has been removed, and that the *SelectedValue* property is configured to use data-binding with the *Title* field in the *Customer* object.

5. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
6. Verify that the value of the customer's title is displayed correctly (it should be Mr). Click the drop-down arrow for the *ComboBox* control and verify that it contains the values *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Ms*, and *Miss*.

7. Resize the window to display the app in the narrow view and perform the same checks. Note that you can change the title, and when you switch back to the full-screen view, the new title is displayed.
8. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Creating a ViewModel

You have now seen how to configure data-binding to connect a data source to the controls in a user interface, but the data source that you have been using is very simple, consisting of a single customer. In the real world, the data source is likely to be much more complex, comprising collections of different types of objects. Remember that in MVVM terms, the data source is often provided by the model, and the UI (the view) only communicates with the model indirectly, through a *ViewModel* object. The rationale behind this approach is that the model and the views that display the data provided by this model should be independent of each other; you should not have to change the model if the user interface is modified, nor should you be required to adjust the UI if the underlying model changes.

The ViewModel provides the connection between the view and the model, and it also implements the business logic for the app. Again, this business logic should be independent of the view and the model. The ViewModel exposes the business logic to the view by implementing a collection of commands. The UI can trigger these commands based on the way in which the user navigates through the app. In the following exercise, you will extend the Customers app. You will implement a model that contains a list of *Customer* objects, and you will create a ViewModel that provides commands with which the view can move between customers.

Create a ViewModel for managing Customer information

1. Open the Customers project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 26\ViewModel folder in your Documents folder. This project contains a completed version of the Customers app from the previous set of exercises; if you prefer, you can continue to use your own version of the project.
2. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Customers project, point to Add, and

then click Class.

3. In the Add New Items – Customers dialog box, in the Name box, type **ViewModel.cs**, and then click Add.

This class provides a basic ViewModel that contains a collection of *Customer* objects. The user interface will bind to the data exposed by this ViewModel.

4. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the ViewModel.cs file, mark the class as public, and add the code shown in the following example in bold to the *ViewModel* class:

```
public class ViewModel
{
    private List<Customer> customers;
    public ViewModel()
    {
        this.customers = new List<Customer>
        {
            new Customer
            {
                CustomerID = 1,
                Title = "Mr",
                FirstName="John",
                LastName="Sharp",
                EmailAddress="john@contoso.com",
                Phone="111-1111"
            },
            new Customer
            {
                CustomerID = 2,
                Title = "Mrs",
                FirstName="Diana",
                LastName="Sharp",
                EmailAddress="diana@contoso.com",
                Phone="111-1112"
            },
            new Customer
            {
                CustomerID = 3,
                Title = "Ms",
                FirstName="Francesca",
                LastName="Sharp",
```

```

        EmailAddress="frankie@contoso.com",
        Phone="111-1113"
    }
};
}
}

```

The *ViewModel* class uses a *List<Customer>* object as its model, and the constructor populates this list with some sample data.

5. Add the private variable *currentCustomer* shown in bold in the following code to the *ViewModel* class, and initialize this variable to zero in the constructor:

```

class ViewModel
{
    private List<Customer> customers;
    private int currentCustomer;
    public ViewModel()
    {
        this.currentCustomer = 0;
        this.customers = new List<Customer>
        {
            ...
        }
    }
}

```

The *ViewModel* class will use this variable to track which *Customer* object the view is currently displaying.

6. Add the *Current* property shown here in bold to the *ViewModel* class, after the constructor:

```

class ViewModel
{
    ...
    public ViewModel()
    {
        ...
    }
    public Customer Current
    {

```

```

        get { return this.customers[currentCustomer]; }
    }
}

```

The *Current* property provides access to the current *Customer* object in the model.

#### NOTE

It is good practice to provide controlled access to a data model; only the *ViewModel* should be able to modify the model. However, this restriction does not prevent the view from being able to update the data presented by the *ViewModel*—it just cannot change the model and make it refer to a different data source.

7. Open the *MainPage.xaml.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window.
8. In the *MainPage* constructor, remove the code that creates the *Customer* object and replace it with a statement that creates an instance of the *ViewModel* class. Change the statement that sets the *DataContext* property of the *MainPage* object to reference the new *ViewModel* object, as shown here in bold:

```

public MainPage()
{
    ...
    this.cTitle.ItemsSource = titles;
    ViewModel viewModel = new ViewModel();
    this.DataContext = viewModel;
}

```

9. Open the *MainPage.xaml* file in the Design View window.
10. In the XAML pane, modify the data bindings for the *TextBox* and *ComboBox* controls to reference properties through the *Current* object presented by the *ViewModel*, as shown in bold in the following code:

```

<Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" ...>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="id" ...
    Text="{Binding Current.CustomerID, Mode=TwoWay}" .../>

```

```

        <ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="3" x:Name="title" ...
SelectedValue="{Binding Current.Title, Mode=TwoWay}">
    </ComboBox>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="5" x:Name="firstName" ...
Text="{Binding Current.FirstName, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="7" x:Name="lastName" ...
Text="{Binding Current.LastName, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="3" ... x:Name="email" ...
Text="{Binding Current.EmailAddress, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="3" ... x:Name="phone" ...
Text="{Binding Current.Phone, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
</Grid>
<Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="20,10,20,110" ...>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cId" ...
Text="{Binding Current.CustomerID, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
    <ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cTitle" ...
SelectedValue="{Binding Current.Title, Mode=TwoWay}">
    </ComboBox>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="2" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cFirstName" ...
Text="{Binding Current.FirstName, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
    <TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cLastName" ...
Text="{Binding Current.LastName, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="4" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cEmail" ...
Text="{Binding Current.EmailAddress, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
    ...
    <TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cPhone" ...
Text="{Binding Current.Phone, Mode=TwoWay }" .../>
</Grid>

```

11. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app.
12. Verify that the app displays the details of John Sharp (the first customer in the customers list).
13. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

The ViewModel provides access to customer information through the *Current* property, but currently it does not supply any way to navigate between customers. You can implement methods that increment and decrement the *currentCustomer* variable so that the *Current* property retrieves different



customers, but you should do so in a manner that does not tie the view to the ViewModel. The most commonly accepted technique is to use the Command pattern. In this pattern, the ViewModel exposes methods in the form of commands that the view can invoke. The trick is to avoid explicitly referencing these methods by name in the code for the view. To do this, XAML makes it possible for you to declaratively bind commands to the actions triggered by controls in the UI, as you will see in the exercises in the next section.

## Adding commands to a ViewModel

The XAML markup that binds the action of a control to a command requires that commands exposed by a ViewModel implement the  *ICommand*  interface. This interface defines the following items:

- ***CanExecute***. This method returns a Boolean value indicating whether the command can run. Using this method, a ViewModel can enable or disable a command depending on the context. For example, a command that fetches the next customer from a list should be able to run only if there is a next customer to fetch; if there are no more customers, the command should be disabled.
- ***Execute***. This method runs when the command is invoked.
- ***CanExecuteChanged***. This event is triggered when the state of the ViewModel changes. Under these circumstances, commands that could previously run might now be disabled, and vice versa. For example, if the UI invokes a command that fetches the next customer from a list, if this is the last customer, then subsequent calls to *CanExecute* should return *false*. In these circumstances, the *CanExecuteChanged* event should fire to indicate that the command has been disabled.

In the next exercise, you will create a generic class that implements the  *ICommand*  interface.

Implement the *Command* class

1. In Visual Studio, right-click the Customers project, point to Add, and then click Class.
2. In the Add New Item – Customers dialog box, select the Class template, in

the Name box, type **Command.cs**, and then click Add.

3. In the Code and Text Editor window displaying the Command.cs file, add the following *using* directive to the list at the top of the file:

```
using System.Windows.Input;
```

The *ICommand* interface is defined in this namespace.

4. Make the *Command* class public and specify that it implement the *ICommand* interface, as follows in bold:

```
public class Command : ICommand
{
}
```

5. Add the following private fields to the *Command* class:

```
public class Command : ICommand
{
    private Action methodToExecute = null;
    private Func<bool> methodToDetectCanExecute = null;
}
```

The *Action* and *Func* types are briefly described in [Chapter 20](#). The *Action* type is a delegate that you can use to reference a method that takes no parameters and does not return a value, and the *Func<T>* type is also a delegate that can reference a method that takes no parameters but returns a value of the type specified by the type-parameter *T*. In this class, you will use the *methodToExecute* field to reference the code that the *Command* object will run when it is invoked by the view. The *methodToDetectCanExecute* field will be used to reference the method that detects whether the command can run (it may be disabled for some reason, depending on the state of the app or the data).

6. Add a constructor to the *Command* class. This constructor should take two parameters, an *Action* object and a *Func<T>* object, and assign these parameters to the *methodToExecute* and *methodToDetectCanExecute*

fields, as shown in bold here:

```
public Command : ICommand
{
    ...
    public Command(Action methodToExecute,
        Func<bool> methodToDetectCanExecute)
    {
        this.methodToExecute = methodToExecute;
        this.methodToDetectCanExecute =
            methodToDetectCanExecute;
    }
}
```

The ViewModel will create an instance of this class for each command. The ViewModel will supply the method to run the command, and the method to detect whether the command should be enabled when it calls the constructor.

7. Implement the *Execute* and *CanExecute* methods of the *Command* class by using the methods referenced by the *methodToExecute* and *methodToDetectCanExecute* fields, as follows:

```
public Command : ICommand
{
    ...
    public Command(Action methodToExecute,
        Func<bool> methodToDetectCanExecute)
    {
        ...
    }
    public void Execute(object parameter)
    {
        this.methodToExecute();
    }
    public bool CanExecute(object parameter)
    {
        if (this.methodToDetectCanExecute == null)
        {
            return true;
        }
        else
        {
```

```

        return this.methodToDetectCanExecute();
    }
}

```

Notice that if the ViewModel provides a *null* reference for the *methodToDetectCanExecute* parameter of the constructor, the default action is to assume that the command can run, and the *CanExecute* method returns *true*.

8. Add the public *CanExecuteChanged* event to the *Command* class:

```

public Command : ICommand
{
    ...
    public bool CanExecute(object parameter)
    {
        ...
    }
    public event EventHandler CanExecuteChanged;
}

```

When you bind a command to a control, the control automatically subscribes to this event. This event should be raised by the *Command* object if the state of the ViewModel is updated and the value returned by the *CanExecute* changes. In previous versions of Windows, Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF) provided the *CommandManager* object to detect a change in state and raise the *CanExecuteChanged* event, but the *CommandManager* object is not available to Windows Store apps. Consequently, you must implement this feature manually. The simplest strategy is to use a timer to periodically raise the *CanExecuteChanged* event once a second or so.

9. Add the *using* directive shown here to the list at the top of the file:

```

using Windows.UI.Xaml;

```

10. Above the constructor, add the following field to the *Command* class:

```

public class Command : ICommand

```

```

{
    ...
    private Func<bool> methodToDetectCanExecute = null;
    private DispatcherTimer canExecuteChangedEventTimer = null;
    public Command(Action methodToExecute,
        Func<bool> methodToDetectCanExecute)
    {
        ...
    }
}

```

The *DispatcherTimer* class, defined in the *Windows.UI.Xaml* namespace, implements a timer that can raise an event at specified intervals. You will use the *canExecuteChangedEventTimer* field to trigger the *CanExecuteChanged* event at 1-second intervals.

11. Add the *canExecuteChangedEventTimer\_Click* method shown in bold in the following code to the end of the *Command* class:

```

public class Command : ICommand
{
    ...
    public event EventHandler CanExecuteChanged;
    void canExecuteChangedEventTimer_Tick(object sender, object e)
    {
        if (this.CanExecuteChanged != null)
        {
            this.CanExecuteChanged(this, EventArgs.Empty);
        }
    }
}

```

This method simply raises the *CanExecuteChanged* event if at least one control is bound to the command. Strictly speaking, this method should also check whether the state of the object has changed before raising the event. However, you will set the timer interval to a lengthy period (in processing terms) so that any inefficiencies in not checking for a change in state are minimized.

12. In the *Command* constructor, add the following statements shown in bold.

```

public class Command : ICommand
{
    ...
    public Command(Action methodToExecute,
        Func<bool> methodToDetectCanExecute)
    {
        this.methodToExecute = methodToExecute;
        this.methodToDetectCanExecute = methodToDetectCanExecute;
        this.canExecuteChangedEventTimer = new DispatcherTimer();
        this.canExecuteChangedEventTimer.Tick +=
            canExecuteChangedEventTimer_Tick;
        this.canExecuteChangedEventTimer.Interval =
            new TimeSpan(0, 0, 1);
        this.canExecuteChangedEventTimer.Start();
    }
    ...
}

```

This code initiates the *DispatcherTimer* object and sets the interval for timer events to 1 second before starting the timer running.

13. On the Build menu, click Build Solution and verify that your app builds without errors.

You can now use the *Command* class to add commands to the *ViewModel* class. In the next exercise, you will define commands with which a view can move between customers.

Add *NextCustomer* and *PreviousCustomer* commands to the *ViewModel* class

1. In Visual Studio, display the *ViewModel.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window.
2. Add the following *using* directive to the top of the file and modify the definition of the *ViewModel* class to implement the *INotifyPropertyChanged* interface.

```

...
using System.ComponentModel;
namespace Customers
{
    public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
    {
        ...
    }
}

```

```

    }
}

```

3. Add the *PropertyChanged* event and *OnPropertyChanged* method to the end of the *ViewModel* class. This is the same code that you included in the *Customer* class.

```

public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;
    protected virtual void OnPropertyChanged(string propertyName)
    {
        if (PropertyChanged != null)
        {
            PropertyChanged(this,
                new PropertyChangedEventArgs(propertyName));
        }
    }
}

```

Remember that the view references data through the *Current* property in the data-binding expressions for the various controls that it contains. When the *ViewModel* class moves to a different customer, it must raise the *PropertyChanged* event to notify the view that the data to be displayed has changed.

4. After the constructor, add the following fields and properties to the *ViewModel* class:

```

public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public ViewModel()
    {
        ...
    }
    private bool isAtStart;
    public bool IsAtStart
    {
        get { return this.isAtStart; }
        set

```

```

        {
            this._isAtStart = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("IsAtStart");
        }
    }
    private bool isAtEnd;
    public bool IsAtEnd
    {
        get { return this.isAtEnd; }
        set
        {
            this._isAtEnd = value;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("IsAtEnd");
        }
    }
    ...
}

```

You will use these two properties to track the state of the ViewModel. The *IsAtStart* property will be set to *true* when the *currentCustomer* field in the ViewModel is positioned at the start of the customers collection, and the *IsAtEnd* property will be set to *true* when the ViewModel is positioned at the end of the customers collection.

5. Modify the constructor to set the *IsAtStart* and *IsAtEnd* properties, as follows in bold:

```

public ViewModel()
{
    this.currentCustomer = 0;
    this.IsAtStart = true;
    this.IsAtEnd = false;
    ...
}

```

6. After the *Current* property, add the *Next* and *Previous* private methods shown here in bold to the *ViewModel* class:

```

public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public Customer Current
    {

```



```

        get { return this.customers[currentCustomer]; }
    }
    private void Next()
    {
        if (this.customers.Count - 1 > this.currentCustomer)
        {
            this.currentCustomer++;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("Current");
            this.IsAtStart = false;
            this.IsAtEnd =
                (this.customers.Count - 1 == this.currentCustomer);
        }
    }
    private void Previous()
    {
        if (this.currentCustomer > 0)
        {
            this.currentCustomer--;
            this.OnPropertyChanged("Current");
            this.IsAtEnd = false;
            this.IsAtStart = (this.currentCustomer == 0);
        }
    }
    ...
}

```

#### NOTE

The *Count* property returns the number of items in a collection, but remember that the items in a collection are numbered from 0 to *Count - 1*.

These methods update the *currentCustomer* variable to refer to the next (or previous) customer in the customers list. Notice that these methods maintain the values for the *IsAtStart* and *IsAtEnd* properties, and indicate that the current customer has changed by raising the *PropertyChanged* event for the *Current* property. These methods are private because they should not be accessible from outside the *ViewModel* class. External classes will run these methods by using commands, which you will add in the following steps.

7. Add the *NextCustomer* and *PreviousCustomer* automatic properties shown

here to the *ViewModel* class.

```
public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    private List<Customer> customers;
    private int currentCustomer;
    public Command NextCustomer { get; private set; }
    public Command PreviousCustomer { get; private set; }
    ...
}
```

The view will bind to these *Command* objects so that the user can navigate between customers.

8. In the *ViewModel* constructor, set the *NextCustomer* and *PreviousCustomer* properties to refer to new *Command* objects, as follows:

```
public ViewModel()
{
    this.currentCustomer = 0;
    this.IsAtStart = true;
    this.IsAtEnd = false;
    this.NextCustomer = new Command(this.Next, () =>
        { return this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtEnd; });
    this.PreviousCustomer = new Command(this.Previous, () =>
        { return this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtStart; });
    ...
}
```

The *NextCustomer Command* specifies the *Next* method as the operation to perform when the *Execute* method is invoked. The lambda expression `() => { return this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtEnd; }` is specified as the function to call when the *CanExecuteMethod* runs. This expression returns *true* as long as the customers list contains at least one customer and the *ViewModel* is not positioned on the final customer in this list. The *PreviousCustomer Command* follows the same pattern: it invokes the *Previous* method to retrieve the previous customer from the list, and the *CanExecuteMethod* references the expression `() => { return this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtStart; }`, which returns *true* as long as the customers list contains at least one customer and the *ViewModel* is

not positioned on the first customer in this list.

9. On the Build menu, click Build Solution and verify that your app builds without errors.

Now that you have added the *NextCustomer* and *PreviousCustomer* commands to the ViewModel, you can bind these commands to buttons in the view. When the user clicks a button, the appropriate command will run.

Microsoft publishes guidelines for adding buttons to views in Windows Store apps, and the general recommendation is that buttons that invoke commands should be placed on the app bar. Windows Store apps provide two app bars: one appears at the top of the form and the other appears at the bottom. Buttons that navigate through an app or data are commonly placed on the top app bar, and this is the approach that you will adopt in the next exercise.

#### NOTE

You can find the Microsoft guidelines for implementing app bars at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/hh465302.aspx>.

Add Next and Previous buttons to the Customers form

1. Open the MainPage.xaml file in the Design View window.
2. Scroll to the bottom of the XAML pane and add the following markup shown in bold, immediately above the closing `</Page>` tag:

```
...
    <Page.TopAppBar >
        <AppBar IsSticky="True">
            <StackPanel Orientation="Horizontal" HorizontalAlignment="Center">
                <AppBarButton x:Name="previousCustomer" Icon="Back"
Command="{Binding Path=PreviousCustomer}">
                <AppBarButton x:Name="nextCustomer" Icon="Forward"
Command="{Binding Path=NextCustomer}">
            </StackPanel>
        </AppBar>
    </Page.TopAppBar>
</Page>
```

There are several points to notice in this fragment of XAML markup:

- By default, the app bar appears when the user right-clicks the form, presses Windows Key+Z, or swipes from the top or bottom edge of the form. The app bar remains open until the user performs another action in the form, at which point it disappears again. You can prevent an app bar from disappearing automatically by setting the *IsSticky* property to *true*, as shown in this markup. In this case, the app bar remains open until the user right-clicks the form, presses Windows Key+Z, or swipes the app bar off the top edge of the form. By applying this setting, the user can quickly move between customers without having to repeat the gesture to display the app bar each time.
- The *AppBar* control contains a *StackPanel* control. Like many controls, an *AppBar* can contain only a single piece of content. If you need to display several items in a control, you must use a container control such as a *Grid* or a *StackPanel*. In this case, a *StackPanel* is the most convenient, and the items it displays will be laid out horizontally.
- The *AppBar* control uses *AppBarButton* controls. These are stylized versions of the standard *Button* controls, designed specifically for use on an app bar (they are circular, and respond with highlighting when the user hovers the pointer over them or clicks them, although you can override this behavior by defining your own layouts, transformations, and transitions as part of the properties of the control). You can display an icon that indicates the purpose of the *AppBarButton* control. The Windows App Store templates include a variety of stock icons (such as Back and Forward shown in the sample code above), and you can also define your own custom icons and bitmaps.

#### NOTE

You can browse the full set of stock icons available by using the Properties window. In the Icon section, click Symbol icon. The available stock icons appear in the list box control that appears. You can also add a text caption to an *AppBarButton* control by setting the *Label* property. However, you should be wary of doing this, especially if you are designing an application that could be used in foreign cultures. Instead, you should simply stick with the icons, which have been designed to be recognized internationally and language independent.

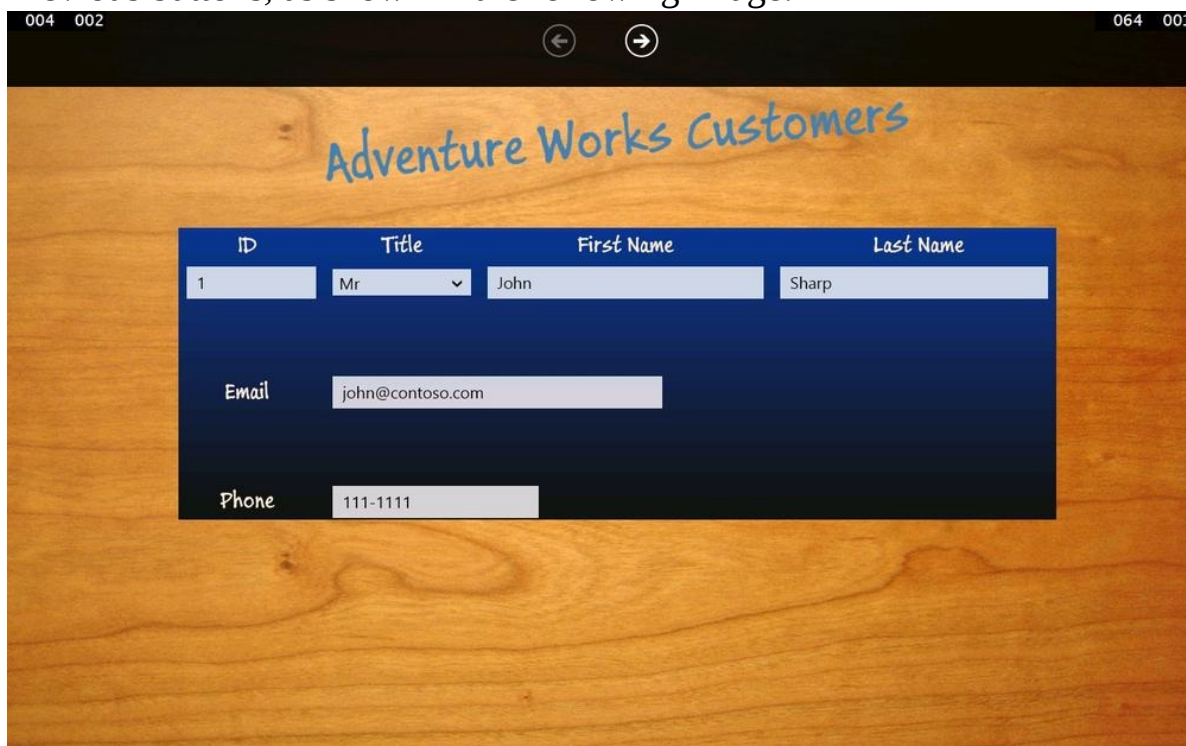
- Each button has a *Command* property. This is the property that you can bind to an object that implements the  *ICommand* interface. In this application, you have bound the buttons to the *PreviousCustomer* and *NextCustomer* commands in the *ViewModel* class. When the user clicks either of these buttons at run time, the corresponding command will run.

- On the Debug menu, click Start Without Debugging.

The Customers form should appear and display the details for John Sharp.

- Right-click anywhere on the background of the form.

The app bar should appear at the top of the form and display the Next and Previous buttons, as shown in the following image:



Notice that the *Previous* button is not available. This is because the *IsAtStart* property of the *ViewModel* is *true*, and the *CanExecute* method of the *Command* object referenced by the *Previous* button indicates that the command cannot run.

- On the app bar, click Next.

The details for customer 2, Diana Sharp, should appear, and after a short delay of up to 1 second, the *Previous* button should become available. The *IsAtStart*

property is no longer *true*, so the *CanExecute* method of the command returns *true*. However, the button is not notified of this change in state until the *timer* object in the command expires and triggers the *CanExecuteChanged* event, which might take up to a second to occur.

#### NOTE

If you require a more instantaneous reaction to the change in state of commands, you can arrange for the timer in the *Command* class to expire more frequently. However, avoid reducing the time too much, because raising the *CanExecuteChanged* event too frequently can impact the performance of the UI.

- On the app bar, click Next again.
- The details for customer 3, Francesca Sharp, should appear, and after a short delay of up to 1 second, the Next button should no longer be available. This time, the *IsAtEnd* property of the *ViewModel* is *true*, so the *CanExecute* method of the *Command* object for the Next button returns *false* and the command is disabled.
- Resize the window to display the app in the narrow view and verify that the app continues to function correctly. The Next and Previous buttons should step forward and backward through the list of customers.
- Right-click anywhere on the background of the form. The app bar should disappear.
- Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Windows 8.1 contracts

**Chapter 25** briefly mentions that a Windows Store app can implement one or more Windows 8.1 contracts. A contract defines a Windows 8.1 interface with which an application can implement or consume an operating system–defined feature such as searching for information, sharing data, or acting as a resource for picking files. A contract provides a standard mechanism that is shared by other Windows Store apps; users running an application that implements a contract do not have to learn any application-specific procedures to perform the tasks that the contract provides. In essence, contracts make it possible for

Windows Store apps to work together seamlessly.

The most commonly used contracts are as follows:

- **Share Target contract.** With this contract, a Windows Store app can integrate with the Share charm and act as a destination for shared data.

There are actually two sides to sharing: a Windows Store app can register as a sharing source to specify which data it wishes to share and in what formats. A target application that can consume shared data must implement the Share Target contract. After a source app has registered that it can share data, the user can use the Share charm to display a list of apps that implement the Share Target contract and select an app from this list. The Share Target contract defines events to which the target app must respond; the target app uses these events to request and receive the data from the source.

- **File Open Picker contract.** With this contract, a Windows Store app can respond to requests from the Windows 8.1 file picker. Using this contract, a Windows Store app can provide users and other apps with access to the data that it manages in a controlled way. This contract effectively makes it possible for a Windows Store app to become a peer of local storage. A Windows Store app that implements the contract is in total control of the data and the views of this data that it presents to the file picker. Windows 8.1 also provides the File Save Picker contract with which an application can control the way in which data it manages is stored.
- **Search contract.** With this contract, users can search for the data exposed by your app by using the Windows 8.1 Search charm—this is a standard mechanism used by other Windows 8.1 apps. Implementing the Search contract means that users do not have to learn any special procedures specific to your app to search for data. Windows 8.1 provides the basic plumbing for performing a search, and all you have to do is supply the logic that takes a search request and finds the appropriate data.

#### NOTE

For more information on Windows 8.1 contracts as well as examples of how to implement them, visit the “App contracts and extensions” page on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/windows/apps/hh464906.aspx>.

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## Implementing the Search contract

The Customers app works well if you have a small number of records, and you can use the Next and Previous buttons to browse for customer information. However, in a business environment, it is unlikely that you will have such a small number of customers (unless your business is particularly unsuccessful!). Using Next and Previous functionality to browse through a list of hundreds of records to find the details of a specific customer is time consuming and inefficient. To make the app more usable, you should offer a search facility and implement the Search contract.

Visual Studio 2013 includes the Search Contract template. This template generates the code that integrates with the Search charm. When the user selects this charm, apps that implement the Search contract are listed, together with a data-entry box in which the user can specify the data for which to search. If the user chooses to search your app, the search terms or criteria that the user types are passed to your app. You use this information to filter the data in your app and determine which items match the search terms. Your app can then display a list of all matching records by using a page provided as part of the Search Contract template. This all sounds quite complicated, but in truth, much of the complexity is implemented by the Search Contract template. All apps that provide a Search contract should operate in the same way; as such, Microsoft was able to factor out much of the code into the template, as you will see in the following exercises. In this exercise, you will add a Search contract to the Customers app by which a user can search for customers by first name or last name.

Implement the Search contract in the Customers app

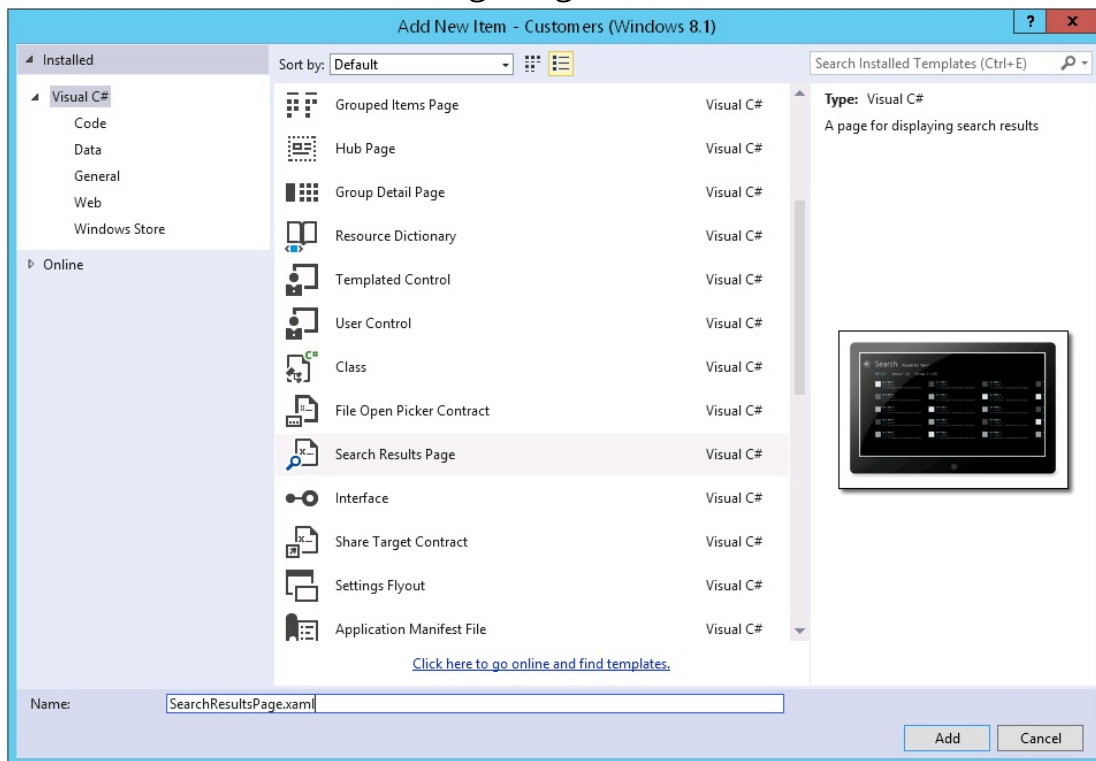
1. In Visual Studio, open the Customers project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 26\Search folder in your Documents folder.

This version of the Customers app has the same *ViewModel* that you created in the previous exercise, but the data source contains details for many more customers. The customer information is still held in a *List<Customer>* object, but this object is now created by the *DataSource* class in the *DataSource.cs* file. The *ViewModel* class references this list



instead of creating the small collection of three customers used by the previous exercise.

2. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Customers project, point to Add, and then click New Item.
3. In the Add New Item – Customers dialog box, in the left pane, click Windows Store. In the middle pane, select the Search Results Page template. In the Name box, enter **SearchResultsPage.xaml**, and then click Add, as shown in the following image:



Visual Studio displays a message box with the text “This addition depends on files that are missing from your project. Without these files you must resolve dependencies on the Common namespace manually. Add the missing files automatically?”



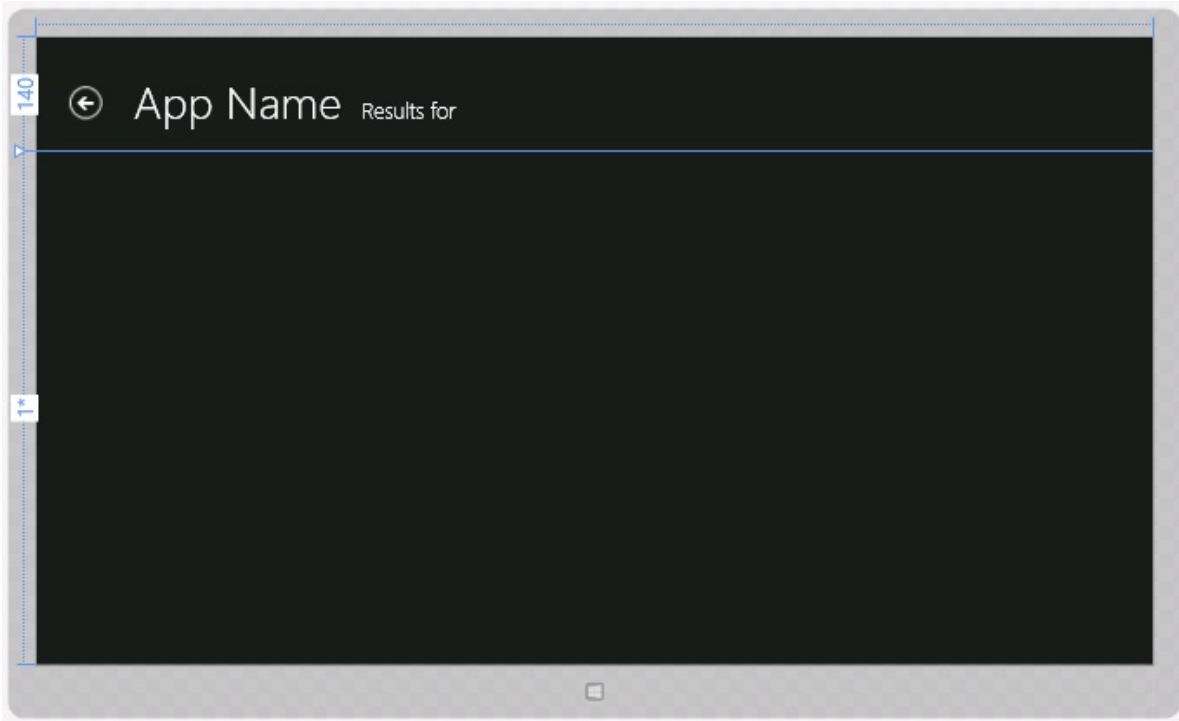
This message occurs because the Customers app was originally created by using the Blank App template, and this template does not include all of the code and other elements required by the Search Contract template. Click Yes to allow the Search Contract template to add these items.

The Search Contract template generates a new XAML page called `SearchResultsPage.xaml`, together with a code file called `SearchResultsPage.xaml.cs`, which is displayed in the Code and Text Editor window. A number of new files are added to the Common folder. These files contain code and data types required by the `SearchResultsPage.xaml` page.

#### NOTE

Visual Studio might also report some errors in the `SearchResultsPage.xaml` file. These errors occur because the `SearchResultsPage.xaml` file is created before the required files are added to the Common folder. They will disappear the next time you build the application.

- On the Build menu, click Build Solution.
- In Solution Explorer, double-click the `SearchResultsPage.xaml` file to display it in the Design View window. The page should look like this:



If you examine the XAML markup for this page, you will see that most of the content is laid out by using a *Grid* control called *resultsPanel*, which contains another *Grid* control called *typicalPanel*. The *typicalPanel Grid* control contains the following items:

- An *ItemsControl* control named *filtersItemsControl*. At run time, this control displays a list of filters with which the user can specify how to apply the search criteria that they entered. In the Customers app, you will define filters so that the user can apply the search to the first name or last name of customers.
- A *GridView* control named *resultsGridView*. The customers that match the search criteria are displayed in this control, and the customers are formatted by using a template called *StandardSmallicon300x70ItemTemplate*. You can find this template in the *StandardStyles.xaml* file in the Common folder, and you will modify it to display customer data.

Below the *resultsPanel Grid* control is another *Grid* control that contains the titles and buttons that appear at the top of the page, followed by a *TextBlock* control called *noResultsTextBlock*. This *TextBlock* control is displayed if the search term entered by the user does not match any customers.

At the end of the `SearchResultsPage.xaml` file are the visual state groups used by the Visual State Manager to switch the layout of the controls when the user changes between views.

#### NOTE

You can modify the styles used by the elements on this page to give them the same look and feel as the rest of your app, but you should not attempt to change the layout of the page or add or remove controls. To function properly, the Search contract depends on the correct definitions of these controls.

- In the `<Page.Resources>` section near the top of the `SearchResultsPage.xaml` file, change the value of the `AppName` string resource to **Customers**, as shown here in bold:

```
<Page.Resources>
    ...
    <!-- TODO: Update the following string to be the name of your app -->
    <x:String x:Key="AppName">Customers</x:String>
</Page.Resources>
```

The title displayed in the Design View window changes to Customers.

- In Solution Explorer, expand `SearchResultsPage.xaml`, and then double-click the `SearchResultsPage.xaml.cs` file to display it in the Code and Text Editor window.

This file contains the code for the `SearchResultsPage` class. This class defines the following methods:

- **`navigationHelper_LoadState`**. This method runs when the user enters a search term into the Search charm and selects the Customers app. The criteria provided by the user are passed into this method in the `LoadStateEventArgs` parameter, and the code generated for this method extracts this information and saves it in a local variable called `queryText`. The purpose of this method is to find all items that match the search term and add them as collections (referred to as filters) to the ViewModel implemented by this page. The code generated by the template creates a default filter called All, which you can populate with the details of every customer, although in this app you will

remove the All filter and create filters that contain the details of customers with first names or last names that match the value in the *queryText* variable.

#### NOTE

The *SearchResultsPage* class uses its own ViewModel, called *DefaultViewModel*, defined as a public member of the class. You should not confuse this ViewModel with the one that you created earlier for the Customers app.

- ***Filter\_Checked***. This method runs when the user selects a filter. The details of the filter are provided in the *RoutedEventArgs* parameter, and the code generated for this method retrieves this value and stores it in the *selectedFilter* local variable. In this method, you should update the ViewModel to display the data specified by this filter.

This file also contains the definition of the *Filter* class used by the *SearchResultsPage* class. You should not change the code in this class.

- In Solution Explorer, expand App.xaml, and then double-click App.xaml.cs to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window.
- Add the *private \_mainPageViewModel* field and public *MainViewModel* property to the start of the *App* class, as follows in bold:

```
sealed partial class App : Application
{
    private ViewModel _mainViewModel = null;
    public ViewModel MainViewModel
    {
        get { return this._mainViewModel; }
        set { this._mainViewModel = value; }
    }
    ...
}
```

You will use the *MainViewModel* property to enable the *SearchResultsPage* page to access to the ViewModel of the *MainPage* form.

- In Solution Explorer, expand MainPage.xaml, and then double-click MainPage.xaml.cs to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window.

- In the *MainPage* constructor, add the statement shown here in bold:

```
public MainPage()
{
    ...
    ViewModel viewModel = new ViewModel();
    (Application.Current as App).MainViewModel = viewModel;
    this.DataContext = viewModel;
}
```

This statement makes the *ViewModel* for the *MainPage* form available through the *MainViewModel* property of the *App* class. Notice that you can access the *App* object of the currently running app by using the *Application.Current* static property and casting the result as the *App* type.

- In Solution Explorer, double-click the *ViewModel.cs* file to display it in the Code and Text Editor window.
- In the *ViewModel* class, add the *AllCustomers* public property shown in bold in the following code:

```
public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    private List<Customer> customers;
    public List<Customer> AllCustomers
    {
        get { return this.customers; }
    }
    ...
}
```

This property makes the customers collection used by the *ViewModel* class available to other classes; you will require access to this collection in the *SearchResultsPage* class.

- Display the *SearchPageResults.xaml.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window. Add the following private field shown in bold to the start of the *SearchResultsPage* class:

```
public sealed partial class SearchResultsPage : ...
{
    private Dictionary<string, List<Customer>> searchResults =
```

```

        new Dictionary<string, List<Customer>>>();
    ...
}

```

This *Dictionary* collection will contain the lists of customers that match the search term specified by the user. There will be two lists in this collection: one for customers with a matching first name, and another for customers with a matching last name.

- In the *navigationHelper\_LoadState* method, add the statement shown below in bold immediately after the *TODO* comment:

```

protected override void navigationHelper_LoadState(object sender, LoadStateEventArgs)
{
    var queryText = navigationParameter as String;
    // TODO: Application-specific searching logic...
    // ...
    List<Customer> allCustomers =
        (Application.Current as App).MainViewModel.AllCustomers;
    ...
}

```

- In the *navigationHelper\_LoadState* method, comment out the following statement highlighted in bold:

```

...
var filterList = new List<Filter>();
// filterList.Add(new Filter("All", 0, true));
...

```

The Search contract implemented by the Customers app will not support the All option.

- After this statement, add the following block of code shown in bold:

```

var filterList = new List<Filter>();
// filterList.Add(new Filter("All", 0, true));
// Find all customers where the first name
// or last name matches the query text
queryText = queryText.ToLower();
List<Customer> matchingFirstNames = new List<Customer>();
List<Customer> matchingLastNames = new List<Customer>();

```

```

foreach (Customer customer in allCustomers)
{
    string firstName = customer.FirstName.ToLower();
    string lastName = customer.LastName.ToLower();
    if (firstName.Contains(queryText))
    {
        matchingFirstNames.Add(customer);
    }
    if (lastName.Contains(queryText))
    {
        matchingLastNames.Add(customer);
    }
}

```

This code is the crux of the Search contract. It iterates through the *allCustomers* collection looking for customers that have a value in the *FirstName* or *LastName* property that match the value in the *queryText* variable. The comparison mechanism eliminates any case-sensitivity by converting all data to lowercase. The code adds a reference for each matching customer to the *matchingFirstNames* and *matchingLastNames* collections.

- After the previous block, add the following code shown in bold to the *navigationHelper\_LoadState* method:

```

filterList.Add(new Filter(
    "Matching First Names", matchingFirstNames.Count, false));
filterList.Add(new Filter(
    "Matching Last Names", matchingLastNames.Count, false));
searchResults.Add("Matching First Names", matchingFirstNames);
searchResults.Add("Matching Last Names", matchingLastNames);
// Communicate results through the view model
this.DefaultViewModel["QueryText"] = '\u201c' + queryText + '\u201d';

```

This code adds the details of the *matchingFirstNames* and *matchingLastNames* collections to the list of filters that will be displayed by the search results page. This information consists of a name, together with a count of the number of matches. The collections themselves are added to the *searchResults* collection. The name of each list of customers added to the *searchResults* collection must match the name of each filter specified in the *filterList* collection.

- In the *Filter\_Checked* method, immediately after the *TODO* comment, add the statement shown here in bold:



```
// TODO: Respond to the change in active filter ...
// ...
this.DefaultViewModel["Results"] =
    this.searchResults[selectedFilter.Name];
```

This statement causes the list of customers specified by the selected filter to be displayed on the search results page. The list of customers is retrieved from the *searchResults* collection by using the name of the filter (it will either be “Matching First Names” or “Matching Last Names,” as defined when you added the filters to the *filterList* collection in the previous step).

- In Solution Explorer, double-click *SearchResultsPage.xaml* to display it in the Code and Text Editor window.
- Find the *<DataTemplate>* section in the *resultsGridView GridView* control. This control defines the template that the *SearchResultsPage* uses to display the details of each matching customer. The *Image* and *TextBlock* controls in this *DataTemplate* control use data-binding to display the properties of an object.

```
<DataTemplate>
    <Grid Width="294" Margin="6">
        ...
        <Border ...>
            <Image Source="{Binding Image}" .../>
        </Border>
        <StackPanel Grid.Column="1" Margin="10,-10,0,0">
            <TextBlock Text="{Binding Title}" .../>
            <TextBlock Text="{Binding Subtitle}" .../>
            <TextBlock Text="{Binding Description}" .../>
        </StackPanel>
    </Grid>
</DataTemplate>
```

The *Customer* class has a *Title* property, but it doesn’t have *Image*, *Subtitle*, or *Description* properties. Remove the *Border* control and its associated *Image* control, and change the data bindings for the *Subtitle* and *Description TextBlock* controls to show the *FirstName* and *LastName* properties, instead:

```
<DataTemplate>
    <Grid Width="294" Margin="6">
        ...
        <StackPanel Grid.Column="1" Margin="10,-10,0,0">
```

```

        <TextBlock Text="{Binding Title}" .../>
        <TextBlock Text="{Binding FirstName}" .../>
        <TextBlock Text="{Binding LastName}" .../>
    </StackPanel>
</Grid>
</DataTemplate>

```

The next step is to register the fact that the Customers app now implements the Search contract with the operating system. While you are at it, you can also change the icons that appear for the app on the Windows Start screen, and add a splash screen that appears when the app first starts running.

Register the Customers app with Windows Search

1. In Solution Explorer, double-click the Package.appxmanifest file to display the app manifest in the manifest editor.
2. In the manifest editor, click the Declarations tab.
3. In the Available Declarations list, select Search, and then click Add.

This action registers the Customers app as a search provider with Windows Search.

4. In Visual Studio, open the App.xaml.cs file in the Code and Text Editor window. At the end of the App class, add the *OnSearchActivated* method shown here.

```

protected override void OnSearchActivated(
    Windows.ApplicationModel.Activation.SearchActivatedEventArgs args)
{
    var previousContent = Window.Current.Content;
    var frame = previousContent as Frame;
    frame.Navigate(typeof(SearchResultsPage), args.QueryText);
    Window.Current.Content = frame;
    Window.Current.Activate();
}

```

The *SearchActivated* event is raised when the user searches for data in the app by using the Search charm. The *OnSearchActivated* method for the App object runs when this event is raised. The code in this method obtains a reference to the Windows *Frame* object currently displaying the app (the

*Frame* object represents the area of the screen currently displaying the app) and then creates an instance of the *SearchResultsPage* class which it displays in this frame, passing the query criteria (available in the *QueryText* property of the *args* parameter) that the user has entered in the Search charm to this page.

5. In Solution Explorer, expand the Assets folder.

This folder contains several graphics images: the default images displayed by the splash screen when the app starts running, the icon that appears if you pin the app to the Start screen, and the small icon that appears in the list of installed apps on the Start menu or when the user invokes the Search charm (there is also an image file that you can attach to the app when it is uploaded to the Windows Store). Each image has a specific size: the logo image that appears on the Start screen must be  $150 \times 150$  pixels; the small logo image that appears with the Search charm must be  $30 \times 30$  pixels; and the logo used by the splash screen must be  $620 \times 300$  pixels.

6. Right-click the Assets folder, point to Add, and then click Existing Item.

7. In the Add Existing Item – Customers dialog box, move to the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 26\Resources folder in your Documents folder, select all three files in this folder, and then click Add.

These new graphics files contain more colorful images than the stock gray and white ones provided by the Blank App template.

8. In Solution Explorer, double-click the Package.appxmanifest file, and then click the Visual Assets tab.

Using this tab, you can specify the way in which your app presents itself to the user, including the logos that are displayed.

9. In the All Image Assets box, click Square 150x150 Logo. In the Square 150x150 logo text box, type **Assets\AdventureWorksLogo150x150.png**.
10. In the All Image Assets box, click Square 30x30 Logo. In the Square 30x30 logo text box, type **Assets\AdventureWorksLogo30x30.png**.

11. In the All Image Assets box, click Splash Screen. In the Splash screen text box, type **Assets\AdventureWorksLogo620x300.png**.
12. On the Build menu, click Build Solution.

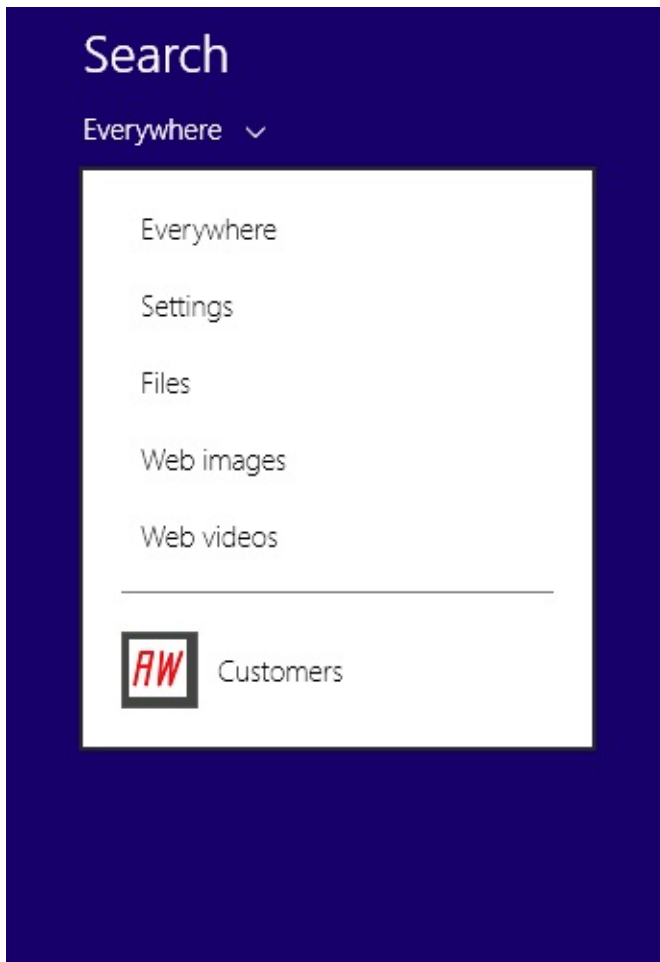
You can now test the Search contract and verify that it works as expected.

Test the Search contract

1. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to run the app. Notice that the Splash screen now appears briefly when the app starts, before the Adventure Works Customers window appears.

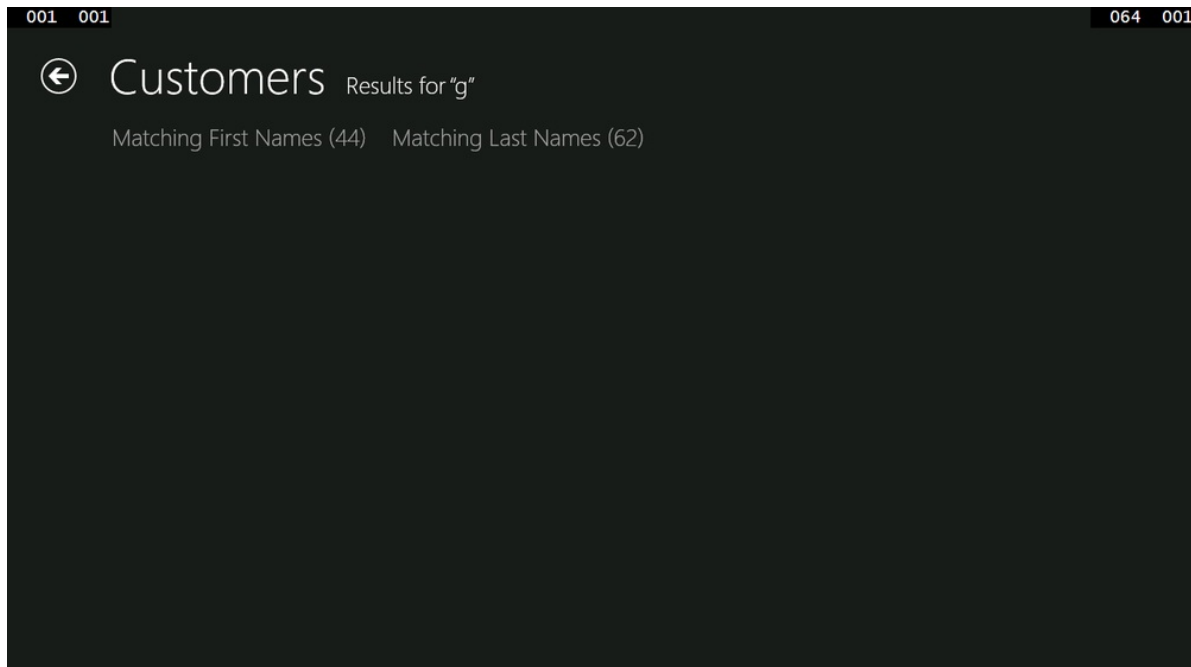
When the app appears, it should display the details for customer 1, Orlando Gee.

2. Press Windows Key+C to display the Charms bar and then click Search.
3. The Search pane should appear. Click the drop-down list, and the Customers app should appear (together with the small logo), as shown in the following image:



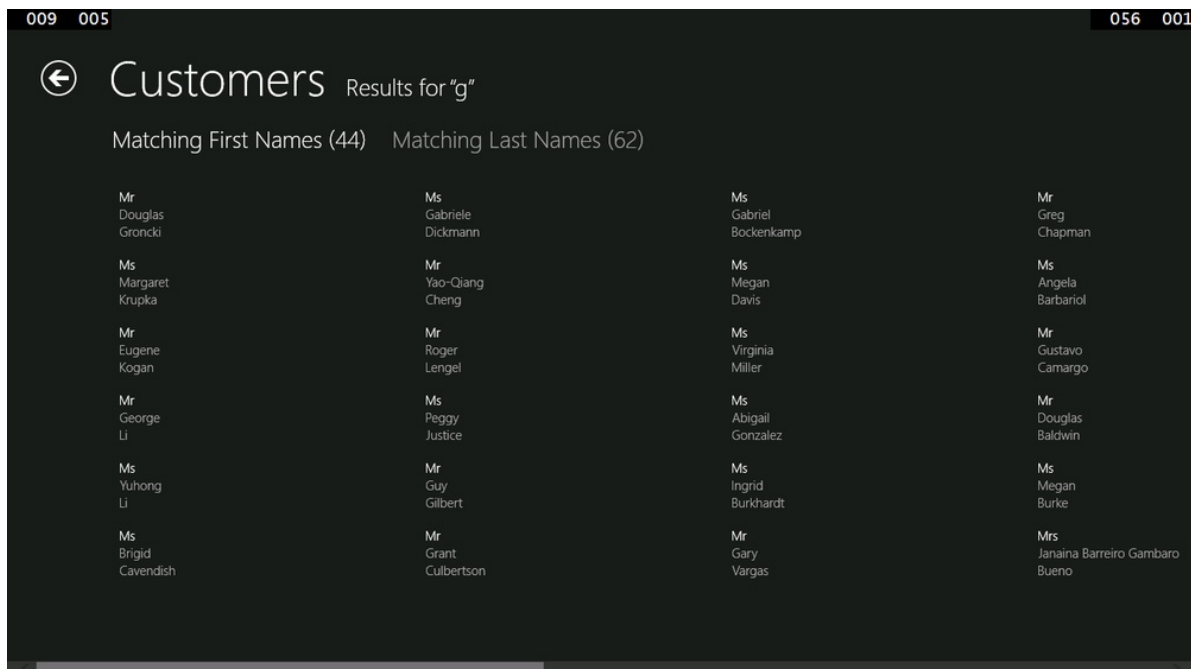
- Click the Customers app, type **G** into the text box, and then click the Search icon.

The search results page should appear, displaying the number of matches for customers whose first or last name contains the letter *G*. Notice that the name that you specified when you added the filter to the *filterList* collection is displayed at the top of the page, together with the number of matches.



- Click Matching First Names.

The data identified by the *Matching First Names* filter appears.



- Click Matching Last Names.

The list of customers whose last name contains the letter G should appear.

- Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Navigating to a selected item

Adding basic search functionality is relatively straightforward, but you can add a number of features to make this functionality more useful. The most important is the ability to click a customer name in the search results page and go directly to that customer in the Customers app. This is what you will do in the final exercise in this chapter.

Display the selected customer from the search results page

1. In Visual Studio, open the `ViewModel.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window and then, between the *Current* property and the *Next* method add the *GoTo* method shown in bold in the following code to the *ViewModel* class:

```
public Customer Current
{
    ...
}
public void GoTo(Customer customer)
{
    this.currentCustomer = this.customers.IndexOf(customer);
    this.OnPropertyChanged("Current");
    this.IsAtStart = (this.currentCustomer == 0);
    this.IsAtEnd = (this.customers.Count - 1 == this.currentCustomer);
}
private void Next()
{
    ...
}
```

The *GoTo* method takes a *Customer* object as a parameter and uses the *IndexOf* method to find which customer this is in the customers collection. It then sets this customer to be the currently displayed customer.

2. Open the `SearchResultsPage.xaml` file in the Design View window.
3. In the XAML pane, find the markup for the *resultsGridView* *GridView* control and add the *ItemClick* property between the *IsItemClickEnabled* and *ItemsSource* properties, as shown here in bold:

```
<GridView
    x:Name="resultsGridView"
```

```

...
IsItemClickEnabled="True"
ItemClick="OnItemClick"
ItemsSource="{Binding Source={...}}"
...
</GridView>

```

The *ItemClick* property specifies the name of the event-handling method to run when the user clicks an item in the *GridView* control. You will write this method shortly.

4. Open the *SearchPageResults.xaml.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window and then, after the constructor, add the *OnItemClick* method shown in the following code to the *SearchResultsPage* class:
5. Add the *OnItemClick* method shown in the following code to the *SearchResultsPage* class:

```

public sealed partial class SearchResultsPage : ...
{
    ...
    public SearchResultsPage()
    {
        this.InitializeComponent();
        this.navigationHelper = new NavigationHelper(this);
        this.navigationHelper.LoadState += navigationHelper_LoadState;
    }
    private void OnItemClick(object sender, ItemClickEventArgs e)
    {
        this.Frame.Navigate(typeof(MainPage), e.ClickedItem);
    }
    ...
}

```

The *OnItemClick* method uses the *Frame.Navigate* method to display the *MainPage* form. The value in *e.ClickedItem* passed as a parameter to the *Navigate* method is a reference to the customer whose name the user clicked in the search results page. The *Navigate* method causes the *OnNavigatedTo* method in the target page (in this case, the *MainPage* form) to run, and the item passed as the parameter to the *Navigate* method is forwarded on to the *OnNavigatedTo* method.

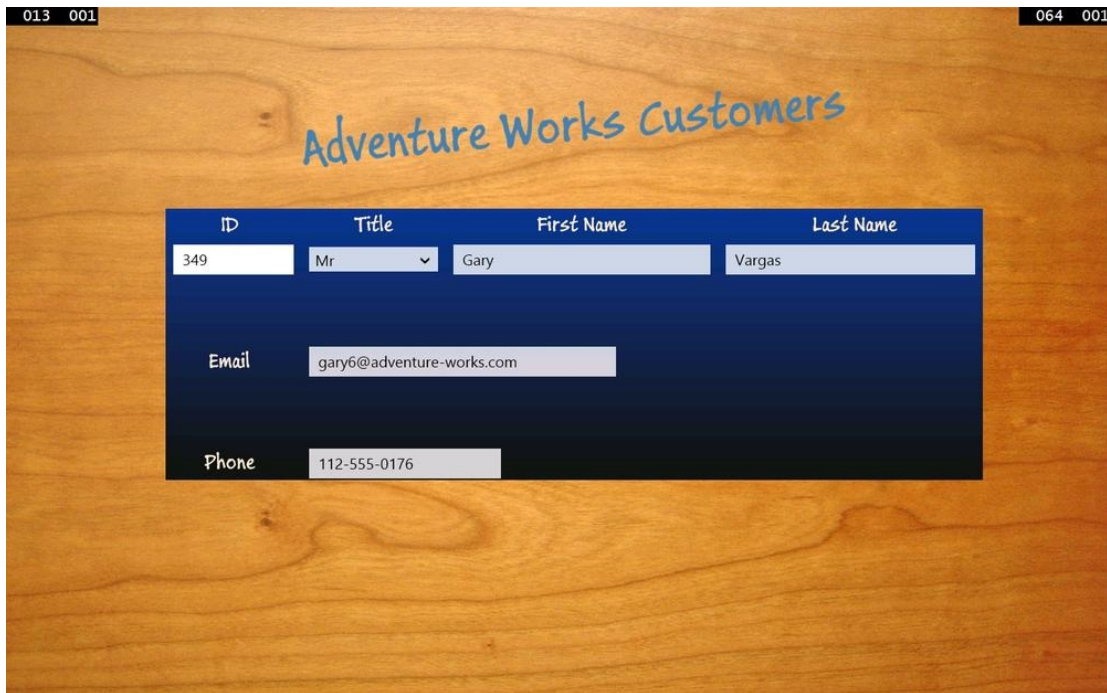


6. Open the `MainPage.xaml.cs` file in the Code and Text Editor window and then, after the `WindowSizeChanged` method, add the `OnNavigatedTo` method shown here to the end of the `MainPage` class:

```
protected override void OnNavigatedTo(NavigationEventArgs e)
{
    base.OnNavigatedTo(e);
    Customer selectedCustomer = e.Parameter as Customer;
    // If the Customer passed in as the parameter is not null
    // then go to that customer
    if (selectedCustomer != null)
    {
        ViewModel viewModel =
            (Application.Current as App).MainViewModel;
        viewModel.GoTo(selectedCustomer);
    }
    this.WindowSizeChanged(this, null);
}
```

This code uses the `GoTo` method of the `ViewModel` class to navigate to the specified customer, which will then be displayed on the `MainPage` form.

7. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the application.
8. When the application appears, press Windows key+C to display the charms, and then click Search.
9. Type **G** in the text box, and then click the icon for the Customers app.
10. On the search results page, click one of the customers, such as Gary Vargas. The `MainPage` form should reappear, displaying the details of the customer:



- Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Summary

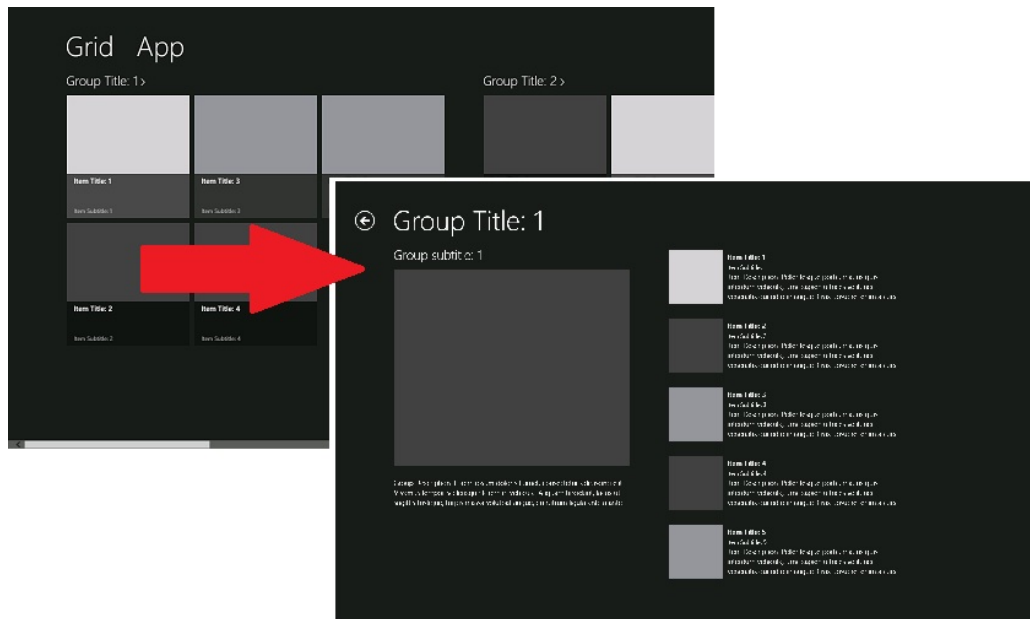
In this chapter, you learned how to display data on a form by using data binding. You saw how to set the data context for a form and how to create a data source that supports data binding by implementing the *INotifyPropertyChanged* interface. You learned how to use the Model-View-ViewModel pattern to create a Windows Store app. You saw how to create a ViewModel with which a view can interact with a data source by using commands. Finally, you learned how to implement the Search contract so that a Windows Store app can integrate search functionality into the features provided by Windows 8.1.

### NOTE

This chapter and [Chapter 25](#) used the Blank App template as the vehicle for showing you how to create a Windows Store app. Visual Studio 2013 provides three other templates that provide a more comprehensive starting point for building Windows Store apps: the Grid App template, the Split App template, and the Hub App Template.

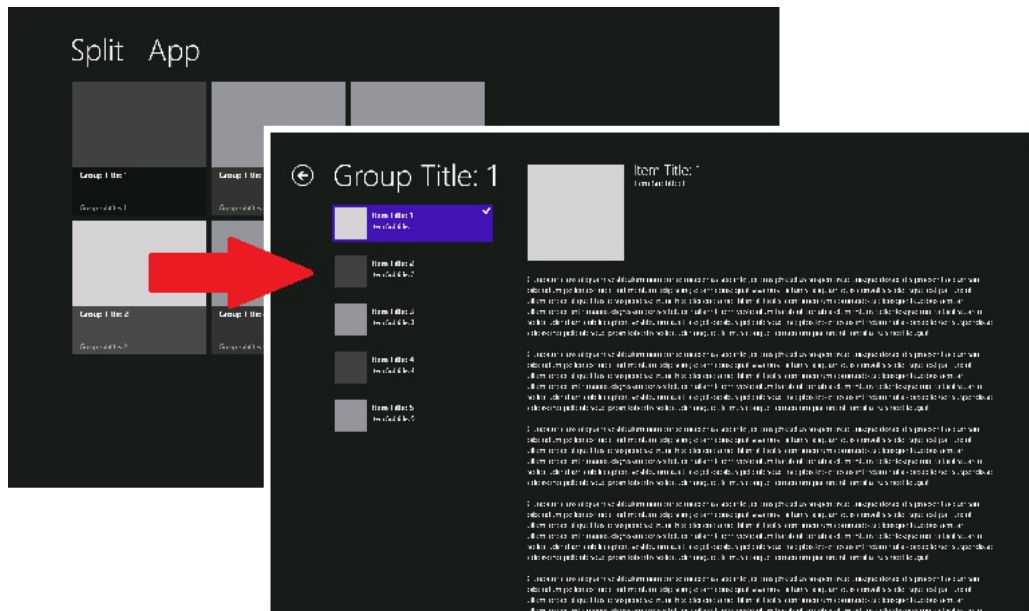
You can use the Grid App template to display and edit hierarchical data that is organized into groups. This template generates an app that has three pages: a top-level page called the Grouped Items page displays a list of groups, a second-level page referred to as the Group Detail page displays the detailed information for a group, and a third-level page known as the

Detail page displays the detailed information for a group, and a third-level page known as the Item Detail page displays the items in a group.

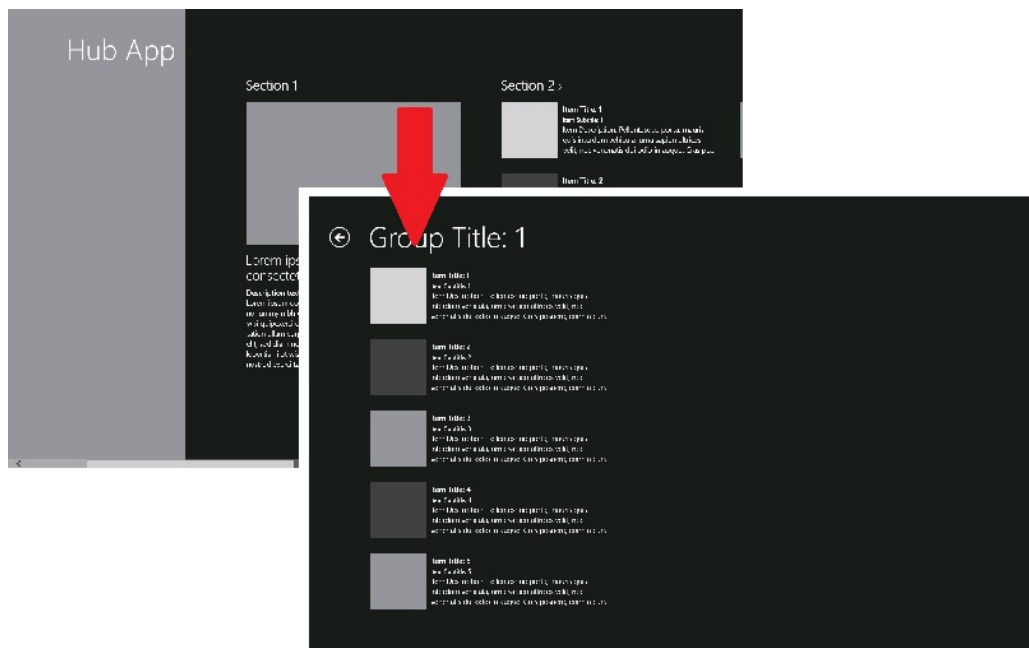


The template uses *GridView* and *ListView* controls to display information by using data binding, and the pages adapt to different views by using the Visual State Manager. Data is formatted and styled by using styles and data templates in the same manner that you have employed in this chapter and [Chapter 25](#). The template also includes a sample data source and a simple ViewModel. You can replace the sample data source with your own business data and modify the ViewModel to handle your own data structures. The intention is that you use the pages and ViewModel as a starting point for your own app and augment them with any additional pages and logic that your app requires. You can employ the same techniques and strategies that you have learned in this chapter.

The Split App template is similar in concept and structure to the Grid App template, except that it generates only two pages: a top-level page called the Items page that displays a list of groups, and a second-level page called the Split page that displays a list of items in a group on the left side and the details of a selected item on the right side.



Finally, the Hub App template provides hub-style navigation. A top-level page makes it possible for the user to scroll between different groups of data items. The user can select a group to display a list of items in that group, and the user can click an item to view its details. As with the Grid App and Split App templates, the Hub App template illustrates best practices for structuring this type of app, and you can customize the various views and view model to match specific business requirements.



- If you want to continue to the next chapter, keep Visual Studio 2013 running, and turn to **Chapter 27**.

- If you want to exit Visual Studio 2013 now, on the File menu, click Exit. If you see a Save dialog box, click Yes and save the project.

## Quick reference

| To   | Do this  |
|--|--|
| Bind the property of a control to the property of an object                                      | <p>Use a data-binding expression in the XAML markup of the control. For example:</p> <pre>&lt;TextBox ... Text="{Binding FirstName}" .../&gt;</pre>  |
| Enable an object to notify a binding of a change in a data value                                 | <p>Implement the <i>INotifyPropertyChanged</i> interface in the class that defines the object and raise the <i>PropertyChanged</i> event each time a property value changes. For example:</p> <pre>class Customer : INotifyPropertyChanged {     ...     public event PropertyChangedEventHandler         PropertyChanged;     protected virtual void OnPropertyChanged(         string propertyName)     {         if (PropertyChanged != null)         {             PropertyChanged(this,                 new PropertyChangedEventArgs(                     propertyName));         }     } }</pre> |
| Enable a control that uses data-binding to update the value of the property to which it is bound | <p>Configure the data-binding as two-way. For example:</p> <pre>&lt;TextBox ... Text="{Binding FirstName, Mode=TwoWay}" .../&gt;</pre>   |
| Separate the business logic that   | <p>Use a ViewModel that provides commands implemented by using the <i>ICommand</i> interface, and bind the <i>Button</i> control to one of these commands.</p>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| runs when the user clicks a Button control from the user interface that contains the Button control | <p>For example:</p> <pre>&lt;Button x:Name="nextCustomer" ...     Command="{Binding Path=NextCustomer}"/&gt;</pre>  |
| Enable an application to support searching by using the Search charm                                | <p>Implement the Search contract by using the Search Contract template. In the <i>navigationHelper_LoadState</i> method of the search page, add code to find all data that matches the search term entered by the user and create search filters that contain this data. In the <i>Filter_Checked</i> method, switch to the search filter specified by the user. Handle the <i>ItemClick</i> event on the search page to navigate to the item selected by the user on the search page and display it in your application.</p> |

# Chapter 27. Accessing a remote database from a Windows Store app

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After completing the chapter, you will be able to:

- Retrieving data from a database
- Creating and using a REST web service
- Fetch data from a remote database by using a REST web service.
- Inserting, updating, and deleting data through a REST web service

**Chapter 26** shows how to implement the Model-View-ViewModel (MVVM) pattern. It also explains how to separate the business logic of an app from the user interface (UI) by using a *ViewModel* class that provides access to the data in the model and implements commands the UI can use to invoke the business logic of the app. **Chapter 26** also illustrates how to use data binding to display the data presented by the *ViewModel* in the user interface and how the UI can update this data. This all results in a fully functional Windows Store app.

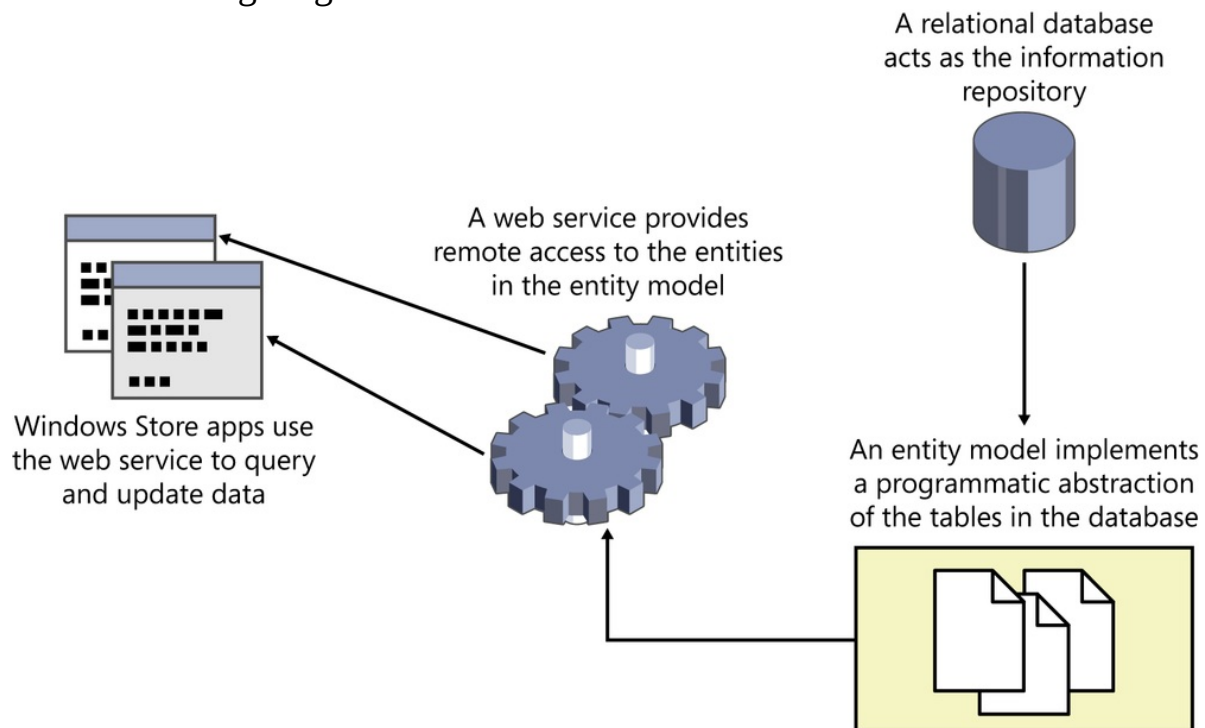
In this chapter, you will turn your attention to the model aspect of the MVVM pattern. In particular, you will see how to implement a model that a Microsoft Windows Store app can use to retrieve and update data in a remote database.

## Retrieving data from a database

So far, the data you have been using has been confined to a simple collection embedded in the *ViewModel* of the app. In the real world, the data displayed and maintained by an app is more likely to be stored in a data source such as a relational database.

Windows Store apps cannot directly access a relational database by using technologies provided by Microsoft (although some third-party database vendors might implement their own solutions). This might sound like a severe restriction, but there are sensible reasons for this limitation. Primarily, it eliminates any dependencies that a Windows Store app might have on external resources, making it a stand-alone item that can be easily packaged and downloaded from the Windows Store without requiring users to install and configure a database management system on their computer. However, many business apps are still going to have a requirement for accessing a database. To address this scenario, you can use a *web service*.

Web services can implement a variety of functions, but one common scenario is to provide an interface with which an app can connect to a remote data source to retrieve and update data. A web service can be located almost anywhere, from the same computer on which the app is running to a web server hosted on a computer on a different continent. As long as you can connect to it, you can use the web service to provide access to the repository for your information. Microsoft Visual Studio provides templates and tools with which you can build a web service very quickly and easily. The simplest strategy is to base the web service on an entity model generated by using the Entity Framework, as shown in the following diagram:





The Entity Framework is a powerful technology with which you can connect to a relational database. It can reduce the amount of code that most developers need to write to add data access capabilities to an app. This is where you will start, but first you need to set up the *AdventureWorks* database; this is the database that contains the details of Adventure Works customers.

#### NOTE

There is not sufficient space in this book to go into great detail on how to use the Entity Framework, and the exercises in this section walk you through only the most essential steps to get started. If you want more information, look at the “Entity Framework” page on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/data/aa937723>.

### Install the *AdventureWorks* database

1. Start Visual Studio 2013 if it is not already running.
2. On the File menu, point to Open, and then click File.
3. In the Open File dialog box, browse to the folder \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 27\AdventureWorks in your Documents folder, click AttachDatabase.sql, and then click Open.
4. In the Transact-SQL Editor window displaying the Create Database command, change the text <YourName> to your user name. This text occurs twice: once on the second line of the command and once on the third.
5. On the SQL menu, click Execute to run the command.
6. In the Connect To Server dialog box, in the Server box, type **(localdb)\v11.0**, ensure that the Authentication box is set to Windows Authentication, and then click Connect. Verify that the command completes without errors.

#### NOTE

(localdb)\V11.0 is the connection string that identifies the version of SQL Server that is installed with Visual Studio 2013. Sometimes this instance of SQL Server can take a

installed with Visual Studio 2013. Sometimes this instance of SQL Server can take a few seconds to start up, and you might receive a timeout error after you click Connect. If this happens, run the command again and specify the same values in the Connect To Server dialog box; SQL Server should now be running and the command should be successful.

7. Close the AttachDatabase.sql window. In the message box that appears asking you whether to save the changes you made to the script, click No.

## Creating an entity model

Now that you have installed the *AdventureWorks* database, you can use the Entity Framework to create an entity model that an app can use to query and update information in this database. If you have worked with databases in the past, you might be familiar with technologies such as ADO.NET, which provides a library of classes that you can use to connect to a database and run SQL commands. ADO.NET is useful, but it requires that you have a decent understanding of SQL, and if you are not careful, it can force you into structuring your code around the logic necessary to perform SQL commands rather than focusing on the business operations of your app. The Entity Framework provides a level of abstraction that reduces the dependencies that your apps have on SQL.

Essentially, the Entity Framework implements a mapping layer between a relational database and your app; it generates an entity model that consists of collections of objects that your app can use just like any other collection. A collection typically corresponds to a table in the database, and each row in a table corresponds to an item in the collection. You perform queries by iterating through the items in a collection, typically by using Language-Integrated Query (LINQ). Behind the scenes, the entity model converts your queries into SQL SELECT commands that fetch the data. You can modify the data in the collection, and then you can arrange for the entity model to generate and perform the appropriate SQL INSERT, UPDATE, and DELETE commands to perform the equivalent operations in the database. In short, the Entity Framework is an excellent vehicle for connecting to a database and retrieving and managing data without requiring that you embed SQL commands in your code.

In the following exercise, you will create a very simple entity model for the Customer table in the *AdventureWorks* database. You will follow what is known

as the *database-first* approach to entity modeling. In this approach, the Entity Framework generates classes based on the definitions of tables in the database. The Entity Framework also makes it possible for you to employ a *code-first* approach; this strategy can generate a set of tables in a database based on classes that you have implemented in your app.

#### NOTE

If you want more information about the code-first approach to creating an entity model, consult the “Code First to an Existing Database” page on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/data/jj200620>.

### Create the AdventureWorks entity model

1. In Visual Studio, open the Customers project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 27\Web Service folder in your Documents folder.

This project contains a modified version of the Customers app from the set of exercises in **Chapter 26**. The ViewModel implements additional commands to skip to the first and last customers in the customers collection, and the app bar contains First and Last buttons that invoke these commands.

Additionally, this version of the project does not implement the Search contract. The reason behind this omission is that by doing so you can concentrate on the core elements of this exercise without the files and other elements that make up the Search contract getting in the way.

2. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Customers solution (not the Customers project), point to Add, and then click New Project.
3. In the Add New Project dialog box, in the left pane, click the Web tab. In the middle pane, click the ASP.NET Web Application template. In the Name box, type **AdventureWorksService**, and then click OK.
4. In the New ASP.NET Project dialog box, click Web API, and then click OK.

▲      ●      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      11      12      13      14      15      16      17      18      19      20      21      22      23      24      25      26      27      28      29      30      31      32      33      34      35      36      37      38      39      40      41      42      43      44      45      46      47      48      49      50      51      52      53      54      55      56      57      58      59      60      61      62      63      64      65      66      67      68      69      70      71      72      73      74      75      76      77      78      79      80      81      82      83      84      85      86      87      88      89      90      91      92      93      94      95      96      97      98      99      100      101      102      103      104      105      106      107      108      109      110      111      112      113      114      115      116      117      118      119      120      121      122 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As mentioned at the start of this section, you cannot access a relational database directly from a Windows Store app, and this includes using the Entity Framework. Instead, you have created a web app (this is not a Windows Store app), and you will host the entity model that you create in this app. The Web API template provides wizards and tools with which you can quickly implement a web service, which is what you will do in the next exercise. This web service will provide remote access to the entity model for the Customers Windows Store app.

5. In Solution Explorer, right-click the Customers solution again, and then click Set Startup Projects.
6. In the Solution 'Customers' Property Pages dialog box, click Multiple Startup Projects. Set the Action for the AdventureWorksService project to Start without debugging, set the Action for the Customers project to Start, and then click OK.

This configuration ensures that the AdventureWorksService web app runs whenever you start the project from the Debug menu.

7. Right-click the AdventureWorksService project, and then click Properties.
8. On the properties page, click the Web tab in the left column.
9. On the Web page, click "Don't open a page. Wait for a request from an external application."

Normally, when you run a web app from Visual Studio, the web browser (Internet Explorer) opens and attempts to display the home page for the app. The AdventureWorksService app does not have a home page; the purpose of this app is to host the web service to which client apps can connect and retrieve data from the *AdventureWorks* database.

10. In the Project Url box, change the address of the web app to **http://localhost:50000/** and then click Create Virtual Directory. In the Microsoft Visual Studio message box that appears, verify that the virtual directory was created successfully, and then click OK.

By default, the ASP.NET project template creates a web app that is hosted by using IIS Express, and it selects a random port for the URL. This

by using **NO EXPRESS**, and it selects a random port for the **URL**. This configuration sets the port to 50000 so that the subsequent steps in the exercises in this chapter can be described more easily.

11. On the File menu, click Save All, and then close the properties page. In Solution Explorer, right-click the AdventureWorksService project, point to Add, and then click New Item.
12. In the Add New Item – AdventureWorksService dialog box, in the left column, click the Data tab. In the middle pane, Click the ADO.NET Entity Data Model template. In the Name box type **AdventureWorksModel.edmx**, and then click Add.

The Entity Data Model Wizard starts. You can use this wizard to generate an entity model from an existing database.

13. On the Choose Model Contents page of the wizard, click Generate From Database, and then click Next.
14. On the Choose Your Data Connection page, click New Connection.
15. In the Connection Properties dialog box, in the Server Name box, type **(localdb)\v11.0**. Verify that Use Windows Authentication is selected. In the Select Or Enter A Database Name box, type **AdventureWorks**, and then click OK.

This action creates a connection to the AdventureWorks database that you configured in the previous exercise.

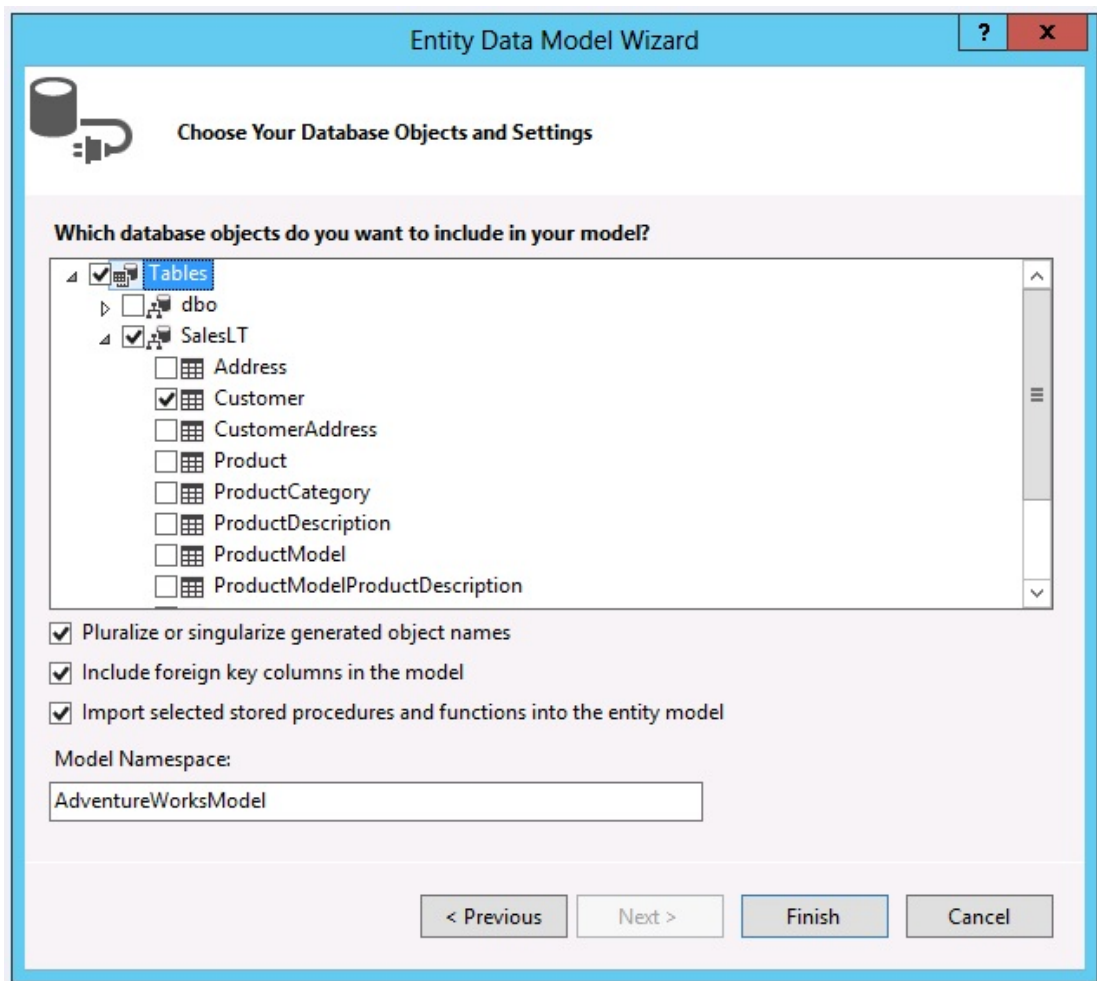
16. On the Choose Your Data Connection page, verify that Save Entity Connection Settings In Web.Config As is selected, confirm that the name of the connection string is AdventureWorksEntities, and then click Next.
17. On the Choose Your Version page, accept the default version of the Entity Framework and then click Next.

#### NOTE

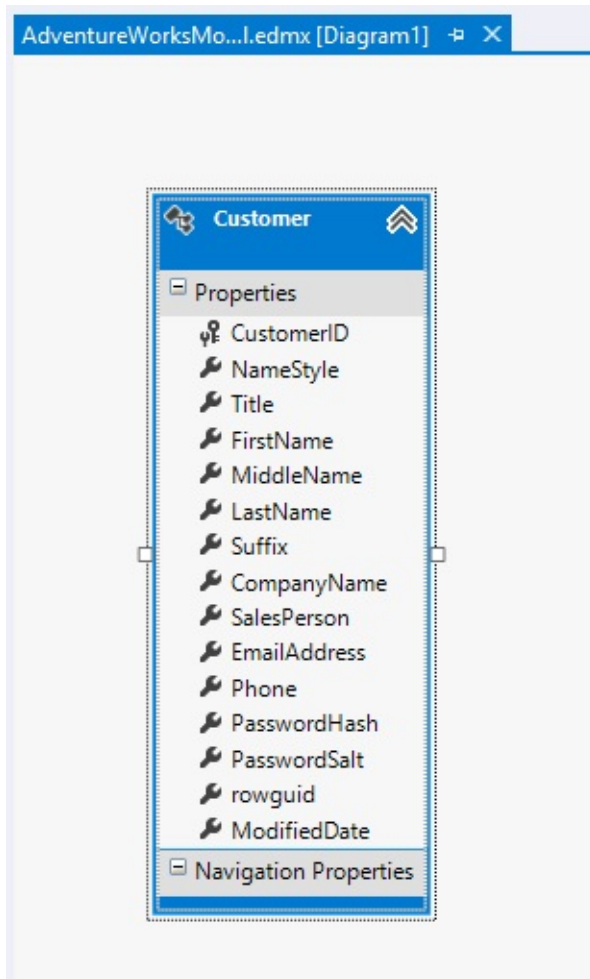
If you are using the Technical Preview edition of Visual Studio 2013, the default version of the Entity Framework referenced by the ASP.NET Web Application

template is version 5.0. In the release version, it is expected that this will change to version 6.0. However, this app does not depend on any version 6.0 specific features, and you can build the app by using version 5.0.

18. On the Choose Your Database Objects And Settings page, expand Tables, expand SalesLT, and then select Customer. Verify that the Pluralize Or Singularize Generated Object Names check box is selected (the other two options on this page will also be selected by default), observe that that Entity Framework generates the classes for the entity model in the *AdventureWorksModel* namespace, and then click Finish.



The Entity Data Model Wizard generates an entity model for the Customers table and displays a graphical representation in the Entity Model editor on the screen, like this:



If the following Security Warning message box appears, select the Do Not Show This Message Again check box, and then click OK. This security warning appears because the Entity Framework uses a technology known as T4 templates to generate the code for your entity model, and it has downloaded these templates from the web by using NuGet. The Entity Framework templates have been verified by Microsoft and are safe to use.



- In the Entity Model editor, right-click the NameStyle column and then click Delete From Model. Using the same technique, delete the MiddleName, Suffix, CompanyName, SalesPerson, PasswordHash, and PasswordSalt columns from the entity model.

The Customers app does not use these columns, and there is no need to retrieve them from the database. However, you should not remove the rowguid and ModifiedDate columns. These columns are used by the database to identify rows in the Customers table and track changes to these rows in a multiuser environment. If you remove these columns, you will not be able to save data back to the database correctly.

- On the Build menu, click Build Solution.
- In Solution Explorer, expand AdventureWorksModel.edmx, expand AdventureWorksModel.tt, and then double-click Customer.cs.

This file contains the class that the Entity Data Model Wizard generated to represent a customer. This class contains automatic properties for each of the columns in the Customer table that you have included in the entity model:

```
public partial class Customer
{
    public int CustomerID { get; set; }
    public string Title { get; set; }
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }
    public string EmailAddress { get; set; }
    public string Phone { get; set; }
    public System.Guid rowguid { get; set; }
    public System.DateTime ModifiedDate { get; set; }
}
```

- In Solution Explorer, under AdventureWorksModel.edmx, expand AdventureWorksModel.Context.tt, and then double-click AdventureWorksModel.Context.cs.

This file contains the definition of a class called *AdventureWorksEntities* (it has the same name that you used when you generated the connection to the database in the Entity Data Model Wizard).

```
public partial class AdventureWorksEntities : DbContext
```



```

{
    public AdventureWorksEntities()
        : base("name=AdventureWorksEntities")
    {
    }
    protected override void OnModelCreating(DbModelBuilder modelBuilder)
    {
        throw new UnintentionalCodeFirstException();
    }
    public DbSet<Customer> Customers { get; set; }
}

```

The *AdventureWorksEntities* class is descended from the *DbContext* class, and this class provides the functionality that an app uses to connect to the database. The constructor passes a parameter to the base class constructor that specifies the name of a connection string to use to connect to the database. If you look in the *Web.config* file, you will find this string in the *<ConnectionStrings>* section. It contains the parameters (among other things) that you specified when you ran the Entity Data Model Wizard.

You can ignore the *OnModelCreating* method in the *AdventureWorksEntities* class. The only other item is the *Customers* collection. This collection has the type *DbSet<Customer>*. The *DbSet* generic type provides methods with which you can add, insert, delete, and query objects in a database; it works in conjunction with the *DbContext* class to generate the appropriate SQL SELECT commands necessary to fetch customer information from the database and populate the collection as well as create the SQL INSERT, UPDATE, and DELETE commands that run if *Customer* objects are added, modified, or removed from the collection. A *DbSet* collection is frequently referred to as an *entity set*.

## Creating and using a REST web service

You have created an entity model that provides operations to retrieve and maintain customer information, and the next step is to implement a web service so that a Windows Store app can access the entity model.

With Visual Studio 2013, you can quickly create a web service in an ASP.NET web app based directly on an entity model generated by using the Entity Framework. The web service uses the entity model to retrieve data from a database and update the database. You can create a web service by using the

Add Scaffold wizard. This wizard can generate a web service that implements the REST model. The REST model uses a navigational scheme to represent business objects and services over a network and the HTTP protocol to transmit requests to access these objects and services. A client app that accesses a resource submits a request in the form of a URL that the web service parses and processes. For example, Adventure Works might publish customer information, exposing the details of each customer as a single resource, by using a scheme similar to this:

<http://AdventureWorks.com/DataService/Customers/1>

Accessing this URL causes the web service to retrieve the data for customer 1. This data can be returned in a number of formats, but for portability the most common formats include XML and JavaScript Object Notation (JSON). A typical JSON response generated by a REST web service request issuing the previous query looks like this:

```
{
  "CustomerID":1,
  "Title":"Mr",
  "FirstName":"Orlando",
  "LastName":"Gee",
  "EmailAddress":"orlando0@adventure-works.com",
  "Phone":"245-555-0173"
}
```

The REST model relies on the app that accesses the data sending the appropriate HTTP verb as part of the request used to access the data. For example, the simple request shown previously should send an HTTP GET request to the web service. HTTP supports other verbs, as well, such as POST, PUT, and DELETE, which you can use to create, modify, and remove resources, respectively. Writing the code to generate the appropriate HTTP requests and parsing the responses returned by a REST web service all sounds quite complicated. Fortunately, the Add Scaffold Wizard can generate most of this code for you, leaving you free to concentrate on the business logic of your app.

In the following exercise, you will create a simple REST web service for the AdventureWorks entity model. This web service will make it possible for a client app to query and maintain customer information

client app to query and maintain customer information.

## Create the AdventureWorks web service

1. In Visual Studio, in the AdventureWorksService project, right-click the Controllers folder, point to Add, and then click New Scaffold Item.
2. In the Add Scaffold Wizard, in the middle pane, scroll down and click the Web API 2 Controller with read/write actions, using Entity Framework template, and then click Add.

In the Add Controller dialog box, in the Controller Name box, type **CustomersController**. In the Model Class list, select Customer (AdventureWorksService), in the Data Context Class list, select AdventureWorksEntities (AdventureWorksService), and then click Add.

In a web service created by using the ASP.NET Web API template, all incoming web requests are handled by one or more controller classes, and each controller class exposes methods that map to each of the different types of REST requests for each of the resources that it exposes. For example, the CustomersController looks like this:

```
public class CustomersController : ApiController
{
    private AdventureWorksEntities db = new AdventureWorksEntities();
    // GET api/Customers
    public IEnumerable<Customer> GetCustomer()
    {
        return db.Customers.AsEnumerable();
    }
    // GET api/Customers/5
    public Customer GetCustomer(Int32 id)
    {
        Customer customer = db.Customers.Find(id);
        if (customer == null)
        {
            throw new HttpResponseException(
                Request.CreateResponse(HttpStatusCode.NotFound));
        }
        return customer;
    }
    // PUT api/Customers/5
    public HttpResponseMessage PutCustomer(Int32 id, Customer customer)
    {
        ...
    }
}
```

```

    }
    // POST api/Customers
    public HttpResponseMessage PostCustomer(Customer customer)
    {
        ...
    }
    // DELETE api/Customers/5
    public HttpResponseMessage DeleteCustomer(Int32 id)
    {
        ...
    }
    ...
}

```

The first *GetCustomer* method handles requests to retrieve all customers, and it satisfies this request by simply returning the entire *Customers* collection from the Entity Framework data model that you created previously. Behind the scenes, the Entity Framework fetches all of the customers from the database and uses this information to populate the *Customers* collection. This method is invoked if an app sends an HTTP GET request to the `api/Customers` URL in this web service.

The *GetCustomer* method is overloaded, and the second version takes an integer parameter. This parameter specifies the `CustomerID` of a specific customer and this method uses the Entity Framework to find the details of this customer before returning it. This method runs when an app sends an HTTP GET request to the `api/Customers/n` URL, where `n` is the ID of the customer to retrieve.

The *PutCustomer* method runs when an app sends an HTTP PUT request to the web service. The request specifies a customer ID and the details of a customer, and the code in this method uses the Entity Framework to update the specified customer by using the detail information (the internal workings of this method are not shown in the preceding code sample).

The *PostCustomer* method responds to HTTP POST requests, and takes the details of a customer as its parameter. This method adds a new customer with these details to the database.

Finally, the *DeleteCustomer* method handles HTTP DELETE requests and removes the customer with the specified customer ID.

The ASP.NET Web API template automatically generates code that directs

requests to the appropriate method in the controller classes, and you can add further controller classes if you need to manage other resources, such as Products or Orders.

**NOTE**

For detailed information on implementing REST web services by using the ASP.NET Web API template, visit the “Web API” page at <http://www.asp.net/web-api>.

You can also create controller classes manually by using the same pattern as that shown by the *CustomersController* class—you do not have to fetch and store data in a database by using the Entity Framework. The ASP.Net Web API template contains an example controller in the *ValuesController.cs* file that you can copy and augment with your own code.

3. In the Controllers folder, right-click the *ValuesController.cs* file, and then click Delete. In the Message box, click OK to confirm that you want to delete this file.

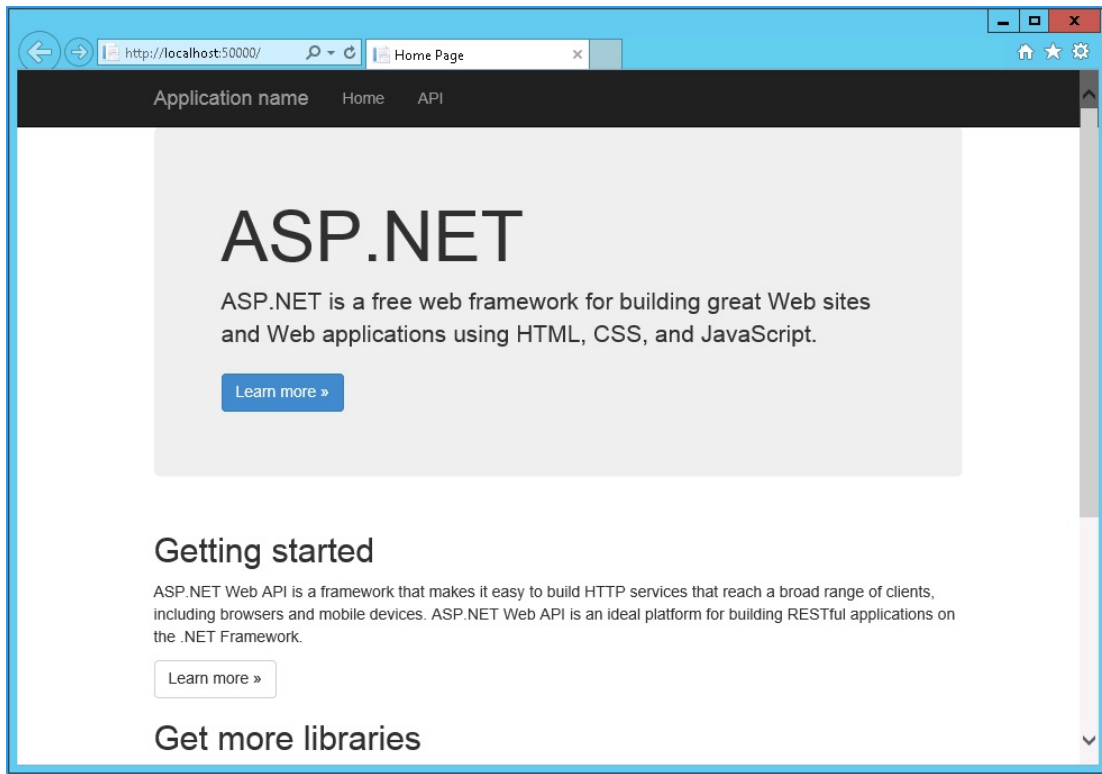
You will not be using the example *ValuesController* class in this exercise.

**NOTE**

Do not delete the *HomeController* class. This controller acts as the entry point to the web app hosting the web service.

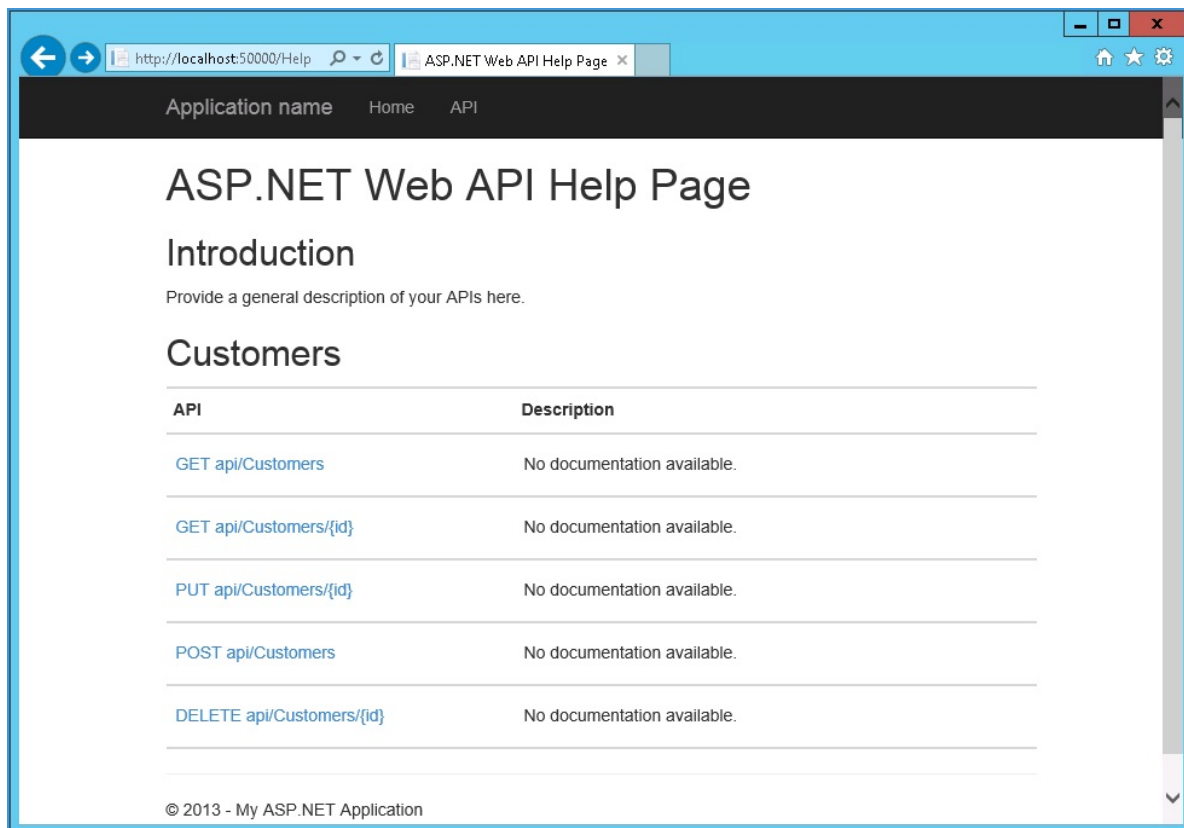
4. In Solution Explorer, check that you have correctly configured the web service. Right-click the AdventureWorksService project, and then, on the shortcut menu that appears, point to View, and then click View In Browser.

Your web browser will start, and it should display the following page:



- On the title bar, click API.

Another page appears, summarizing the REST requests that an app can send to the web service:



- On the address bar, type **http://localhost:50000/api/Customers/1**, and then press Enter. When the message “Do you want to open or save 1.json (223 bytes) from localhost?” appears, click Open.

This request is directed to the overloaded *GetCustomer* method in the *CustomersController* class, and the value 1 is passed as the parameter to this method. Note that the Web API uses routes that start with the path “api” after the address of the server.

The *GetCustomer* method retrieves the details of customer 1 from the database and returns it as a JSON-formatted object. The file 1.json contains this data, which you can open by using Notepad. The data looks like this:

```
{"CustomerID":1,"Title":"Mr","FirstName":"Orlando","LastName":"Gee","EmailAddress":  
"orlando0@adventure-works.com","Phone":"245-555-0173","rowguid":  
"3f5ae95e-b87d-4aed-95b4-c3797afcb74f","ModifiedDate":"2001-08-01T00:00:00"}
```

- Close Notepad, close the web browser and return to Visual Studio.

The next phase of this journey is to connect to the web service from the Customers Windows Store app, and then use the web service to fetch some data.

The .NET Framework provides the *HttpClient* class that an app can use to formulate and send HTTP REST requests to a web service, and the *HttpResponseMessage* class that an app can use to process the result from the web service. These classes abstract the details of the HTTP protocol away from your app code. As such, you can focus on the business logic that displays and manipulates the objects published through the web service. You will use these classes in the following exercise.

**INSTALLING THE ASP.NET WEB API CLIENT LIBRARIES THE *HTTPCLIENT* AND *HTTPRESPONSEMESSAGE* CLASSES ARE PART OF THE ASP.NET WEB API CLIENT LIBRARIES PACKAGE. YOU MIGHT NEED TO DOWNLOAD AND INSTALL THE LATEST VERSION OF THIS PACKAGE AND ADD IT TO THE CUSTOMERS PROJECT BEFORE CONTINUING. TO INSTALL THE PACKAGE, PERFORM THE FOLLOWING STEPS:**

- 1. IN SOLUTION EXPLORER, RIGHT-CLICK THE CUSTOMERS PROJECT, AND THEN, ON THE SHORTCUT MENU THAT APPEARS, CLICK MANAGE NUGET PACKAGES.**
- 2. IN THE CUSTOMERS – MANAGE NUGET PACKAGES WINDOW, IN THE LEFT PANE, CLICK ONLINE. ABOVE THE MIDDLE PANE, IN THE LIST BOX ON THE LEFT, SELECT INCLUDE PRERELEASE. IN THE SEARCH BOX ABOVE THE RIGHT-HAND PANE, TYPE WEB API.**
- 3. IN THE MIDDLE PANE, SELECT THE MICROSOFT ASP.NET WEB API 2 CLIENT, AND THEN CLICK INSTALL.**
- 4. IN THE LICENSE ACCEPTANCE DIALOG BOX, IF YOU ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE LICENSE TERMS, CLICK I ACCEPT.**
- 5. CLOSE THE CUSTOMERS – MANAGE NUGET PACKAGES WINDOW.**

Fetch data from the AdventureWorks web service

1. In Solution Explorer, in the Customers project, right-click the *DataSource.cs* file and then, on the shortcut menu, click Delete. In the message box, click OK to confirm that you want to delete the file.

This file contained the sample data used by the Customers app. You are going to modify the *ViewModel* class to fetch this data from the web service, so this file is no longer required.



2. In Solution Explorer, double-click `ViewModel.cs` to display the file in the Code and Text Editor window.
3. Add the following *using* directives to the list at the top of the file:

```
using System.Net.Http;  
using System.Net.Http.Headers;
```

4. In the *ViewModel* class, add the following variables shown in bold before the *ViewModel* constructor:

```
public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged  
{  
    ...  
    private const string ServerUrl = "http://localhost:50000/";  
    private HttpClient client = null;  
  
    public ViewModel()  
    {  
        ...  
    }  
    ...  
}
```

The *ServerUrl* variable contains the base address of the web service. You will use the *client* variable to connect to the web service.

5. In the *ViewModel* constructor, initialize the customers list to *null* and add the following statements that configure the client variable:

```
public ViewModel()  
{  
    ...  
    this.customers = null;  
    this.client = new HttpClient();  
    this.client.BaseAddress = new Uri(ServerUrl);  
    this.client.DefaultRequestHeaders.Accept.  
        Add(new MediaTypeWithQualityHeaderValue("application/json"));  
}
```

The customers list contains the customers displayed by the app; it was previously populated with the data in the `DataSource.cs` file that you have

removed.

The client variable is initialized with the address of the web server to which it will send requests. A REST web service can receive requests and send responses in a variety of formats, but the Customers app will use JSON. The final statement in the preceding code configures the client variable to submit requests in this format.

6. In Solution Explorer, double-click the *Customer.cs* file in the root folder of the Customers project to display it in the Code and Text Editor window.
7. Immediately after the Phone property, add the public properties shown in bold in the following code to the *Customer* class:

```
public class Customer : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public string Phone
    {
        ...
    }
    public System.Guid rowguid { get; set; }
    public System.DateTime ModifiedDate { get; set; }
    ...
}
```

The web service retrieves these fields from the database, and the Customers app must be prepared to handle them; otherwise, they will be lost if the user decides to modify the details of a Customer (you will add this capability to the Customers app later in this chapter).

8. Return to the *ViewModel* class. After the constructor, add the public *GetDataAsync* method shown here:

```
public async Task GetDataAsync()
{
    try
    {
        var response = await this.client.GetAsync("api/customers");
        if (response.IsSuccessStatusCode)
```

```

    {
        var customerData =
            await response.Content.ReadAsAsync<IEnumerable<Customer>>();
        this.customers = customerData as List<Customer>;
        this.currentCustomer = 0;
        this.OnPropertyChanged("Current");
        this.IsAtStart = true;
        this.IsAtEnd = (this.customers.Count == 0);
    }
    else
    {
        // TODO: Handle GET failure
    }
}
catch (Exception e)
{
    // TODO: Handle exceptions
}
}

```

This method is asynchronous; it uses the *GetAsync* method of the *HttpClient* object to invoke the *api/customers* operation in the web service. This operation fetches the details of the customers from the AdventureWorks database. The *GetAsync* method is itself asynchronous, and returns an *HttpResponseMessage* object wrapped in a Task. The *HttpResponseObject* contains a status code that indicates whether the request was successful, and if it is, the app uses the *ReadAsAsync* method of the *Content* property of the *HttpResponseMessage* object to actually retrieve the data returned by the web service. This data is assigned to the customers collection, the *currentCustomer* property of the ViewModel is set to point to the first customer in this collection, and the *IsAtStart* and *IsAtEnd* properties are initialized to indicate the state of the ViewModel.

#### NOTE

The ASP.NET Web API Client Libraries assume that all web service requests can take an indeterminate length of time to run, and consequently, classes such as *HttpClient* and *HttpResponseMessage* are designed to support asynchronous operations to prevent an app from being blocked while waiting for a response. In fact, these classes only support asynchronous operations; there are no synchronous versions of *GetAsync* or *ReadAsAsync*.

Observe that currently the *GetDataAsync* method does not handle any exceptions or failures other than to consume them silently. You will see a technique for reporting exceptions in a Windows Store app later in this chapter.

#### NOTE

In a production app, you should not fetch data unnecessarily over the network. Instead, you should be selective in the data that you retrieve. However, in this app, the *AdventureWorks* database contains only a few hundred customers, so they are all retrieved and cached in the customers list.

9. Modify the *get* accessor for the *Current* property, as shown in the following:

```
public Customer Current
{
    get
    {
        if (this.customers != null)
        {
            return this.customers[currentCustomer];
        }
        else
        {
            return null;
        }
    }
}
```

The *GetDataAsync* method is asynchronous, so there is the possibility that the customers collection might not be populated when the controls on the *MainPage* form attempt to bind to a customer. In this situation, this modification prevents the data bindings from generating a *null* reference exception when they access the customers collection.

10. In the *ViewModel* constructor, update the conditions that make it possible for each of the commands to run as shown in bold in the following code:

```
public ViewModel()
```

```

{
    ...
    this.NextCustomer = new Command(this.Next,
        () => { return this.customers != null &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtEnd; });
    this.PreviousCustomer = new Command(this.Previous,
        () => { return this.customers != null &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtStart; });
    this.FirstCustomer = new Command(this.First,
        () => { return this.customers != null &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtStart; });
    this.LastCustomer = new Command(this.Last,
        () => { return this.customers != null &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtEnd; });
}

```

These changes ensure that the buttons on the app bar are not enabled until there is some data to display.

11. In Solution Explorer, expand MainPage.xaml and double-click MainPage.xaml.cs to open it in the Code and Text Editor window.
12. Add the following statement shown in bold to the *MainPage* constructor:

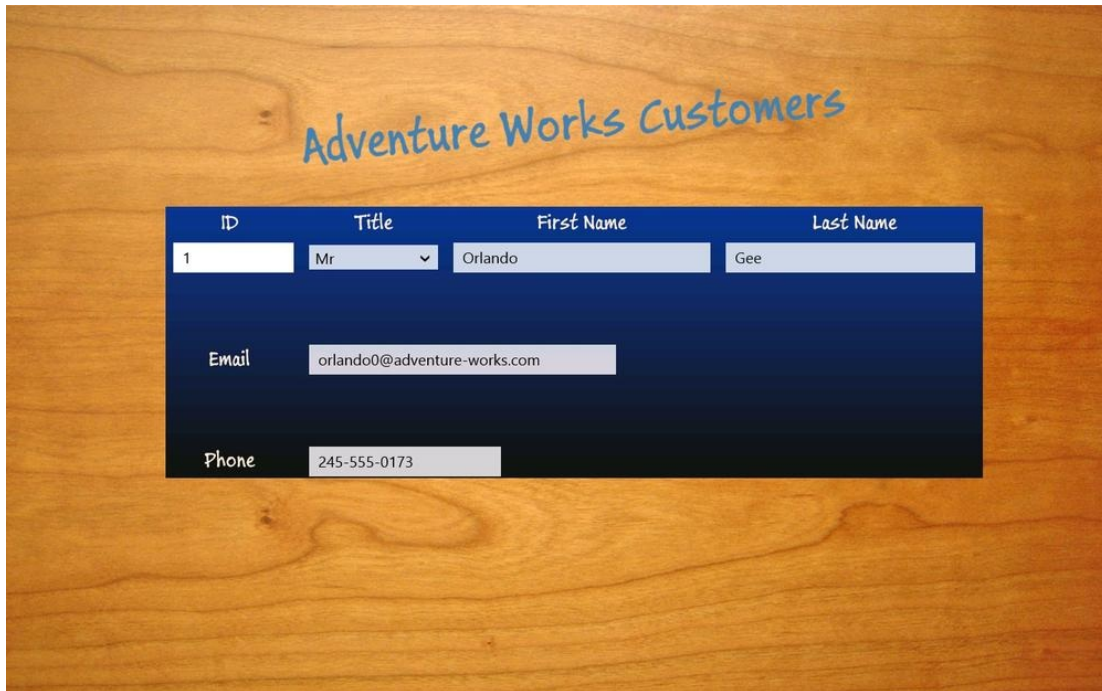
```

public MainPage()
{
    ...
    ViewModel viewModel = new ViewModel();
    viewModel.GetDataAsync();
    this.DataContext = viewModel;
}

```

This statement populates the ViewModel.

13. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app.
14. The form will appear empty initially while the *GetDataAsync* method runs, but after a few seconds the details of the first customer, Orlando Gee, should appear:



- Right-click the form to display the app bar. Use the navigation buttons to move through the list of customers to verify that the form works as expected.
- Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

As a final flourish to this section, when the form is initially displayed it would be helpful to let the user know that although the form appears to be empty, the app is actually in the process of fetching the data. In a Windows Store app, you can use a *ProgressRing* control to provide this feedback. This control should be displayed when the *ViewModel* is busy communicating with the web service, but inactive otherwise.

Add a busy indicator to the Customers form

1. Display the *ViewModel.cs* file in the Code and Text Editor window. After the *GetDataAsync* method, add the private *\_isBusy* field and public *IsBusy* property to the *ViewModel* class, as illustrated here:

```
private bool _isBusy;
public bool IsBusy
{
    get { return this._isBusy; }
    set
    {
        this._isBusy = value;
    }
}
```

```

        this.OnPropertyChanged("IsBusy");
    }
}

```

2. In the *GetDataAsync* method, add the following statements shown in bold:

```

public async Task GetDataAsync()
{
    try
    {
        this.IsBusy = true;
        var response = await this.client.GetAsync("api/customers");
        ...
    }
    catch (Exception e)
    {
        // TODO: Handle exceptions
    }
    finally
    {
        this.IsBusy = false;
    }
}

```

The *GetData* method sets the *IsBusy* property to *true* prior to running the query to fetch the customer information. The *finally* block ensures that the *IsBusy* property is set back to *false*, even if an exception occurs.

3. Open the MainPage.xaml file in the Design View window.
4. In the XAML pane, add as the first item in the top-level *Grid* control the *ProgressRing* control shown in bold in the following code:

```

<Grid Style="{StaticResource GridStyle}">
    <ProgressRing HorizontalAlignment="Center"
VerticalAlignment="Center" Foreground="AntiqueWhite"
Height="100" Width="100" IsActive="{Binding IsBusy}"
Canvas.ZIndex="1"/>
    <Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" Margin="40,104,0,0" ...>
        ...

```

Setting the *Canvas.ZIndex* property to “1” ensures that the *ProgressRing*

appears in front of the other controls displayed by the *Grid* control.

5. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app.

Notice that when the app starts, the progress ring briefly appears before the first customer is displayed. If you find that the first customer appears too quickly, you can introduce a small delay into the *GetData* method just to satisfy yourself that the progress ring is working. Add the following statement which pauses the method for 5 seconds:

```
public async Task GetData()
{
    try
    {
        this.IsBusy = true;
        await Task.Delay(5000);
        this.connection = new AdventureWorksEntities(...);
        ...
    }
    ...
}
```

Be sure to remove this statement when you have finished testing the progress ring.

6. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Inserting, updating, and deleting data through a REST web service

Apart from giving users the ability to query and display data, many apps will have the requirement to also give them the ability to insert, update, and delete information. The ASP.NET Web API implements a model that supports these operations, through the use of HTTP PUT, POST, and DELETE requests. Conventionally, a PUT request modifies an existing resource in a web service and a POST request creates a new instance of a resource. A DELETE request removes a resource. The code generated by the Add Scaffold Wizard in the ASP.NET Web API template follows these conventions.



IDEMPOTENCY IN REST WEB SERVICES IN A REST WEB SERVICE, PUT REQUESTS SHOULD BE IDEMPOTENT. WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT IF YOU PERFORM THE SAME UPDATE REPEATEDLY, THE RESULT SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE SAME. IN THE ADVENTUREWORKSSERVICE EXAMPLE, IF YOU MODIFY A CUSTOMER AND SET THE TELEPHONE NUMBER TO “888-888-8888” IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU PERFORM THIS OPERATION BECAUSE THE EFFECT IS CONSISTENT. THIS MIGHT SEEM OBVIOUS, BUT YOU SHOULD DESIGN A REST WEB SERVICES WITH THIS REQUIREMENT IN MIND. WITH THIS DESIGN APPROACH, A WEB SERVICE CAN BE ROBUST IN THE FACE OF CONCURRENT REQUESTS, OR EVEN IN THE EVENT OF NETWORK FAILURES (IF A CLIENT APP LOSES THE CONNECTION TO THE WEB SERVICE, IT CAN SIMPLY ATTEMPT TO RECONNECT AND PERFORM THE SAME REQUEST AGAIN WITHOUT BEING CONCERNED WHETHER THE PREVIOUS REQUEST WAS SUCCESSFUL). THEREFORE, YOU SHOULD THINK OF A REST WEB SERVICE AS A MEANS FOR STORING AND RETRIEVING DATA, RATHER THAN A SET OF BUSINESS-SPECIFIC OPERATIONS.

FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU WERE BUILDING A BANKING SYSTEM, YOU MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO PROVIDE A *CREDITACCOUNT* METHOD THAT ADDS AN AMOUNT TO THE BALANCE IN A CUSTOMER’S ACCOUNT, AND EXPOSE THIS METHOD AS A PUT OPERATION. HOWEVER, EACH TIME YOU INVOKE THIS OPERATION, THE RESULT IS AN INCREMENTAL CREDIT TO THE ACCOUNT. THEREFORE IT BECOMES NECESSARY TO TRACK WHETHER CALLS TO THE OPERATION ARE SUCCESSFUL. YOUR APP CANNOT INVOKE THIS OPERATION REPEATEDLY IF IT THINKS AN EARLIER CALL FAILED OR TIMED OUT BECAUSE THE RESULT COULD BE MULTIPLE DUPLICATED CREDITS TO THE SAME ACCOUNT.

In the next exercise, you will extend the Customers app and add features with which users can add new customers and modify the details of existing customers by constructing the appropriate REST requests and sending them to the AdventureWorksService web service. You will not provide any functionality to delete customers. This restriction ensures that you have a record of all customers that have done business with the Adventure Works organization, which might be required for auditing purposes. Additionally, even if a customer has not been active for a long time, there is a chance that the customer might place an order at some point in the future.

Implement add and edit functionality in the *ViewModel* class

1. In Visual Studio, open the Customers project, which is located in the \Microsoft Press\Visual CSharp Step By Step\Chapter 27\Updatable ViewModel folder in your Documents folder.

The code in the *ViewModel.cs* file is getting rather lengthy, so it has been reorganized into regions to make it easier to manage. The *ViewModel* class has also been extended with the following Boolean properties that indicate the “mode” in which the *ViewModel* is operating: Browsing, Adding, or Editing. These properties are defined in the region named Properties For Managing The Edit Mode:

- ***IsBrowsing***. This property indicates whether the *ViewModel* is in Browsing mode. When the *ViewModel* is in Browsing mode, the *FirstCustomer*, *LastCustomer*, *PreviousCustomer*, and *NextCustomer* commands are enabled and a view can invoke these commands to browse data.

- **IsAdding.** This property indicates whether the ViewModel is in Adding mode. In this mode, the *FirstCustomer*, *LastCustomer*, *PreviousCustomer*, and *NextCustomer* commands are disabled. You will define an *AddCustomer* command, a *SaveChanges* command, and a *DiscardChanges* command that will be enabled in this mode.
- **IsEditing.** This property indicates whether the ViewModel is in Editing mode. Like Adding mode, in this mode, the *FirstCustomer*, *LastCustomer*, *PreviousCustomer*, and *NextCustomer* commands are disabled. You will define an *EditCustomer* command that will be enabled in this mode. The *SaveChanges* command and *DiscardChanges* command will also be enabled, but the *AddCustomer* command will be disabled. The *EditCustomer* command will be disabled in Adding mode.
- **IsAddingOrEditing.** This property indicates whether the ViewModel is in Adding or Editing mode. You will use this property in the methods that you define in this exercise.
- **CanBrowse.** This property returns *true* if the ViewModel is in Browsing mode and there is an open connection to the web service. The code in the constructor that creates the *FirstCustomer*, *LastCustomer*, *PreviousCustomer*, and *NextCustomer* commands has been updated to use this property to determine whether these commands should be enabled or disabled, as follows:

```
public ViewModel()
{
    ...
    this.NextCustomer = new Command(this.Next,
        () => { return this.CanBrowse &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtEnd; });
    this.PreviousCustomer = new Command(this.Previous,
        () => { return this.CanBrowse &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtStart; });
    this.FirstCustomer = new Command(this.First,
        () => { return this.CanBrowse &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtStart; });
    this.LastCustomer = new Command(this.Last,
        () => { return this.CanBrowse &&
            this.customers.Count > 0 && !this.IsAtEnd; });
}
```

- **CanSaveOrDiscardChanges.** This property returns *true* if the ViewModel is in Adding or Editing mode and it has an open connection to the web service.

The Methods For Fetching And Updating Data region contains the following methods:

- **GetData.** This is the same method that you created earlier in this chapter. It connects to the web service and retrieves the details of every customer.
- **ValidateCustomer.** This method takes a *Customer* object and examines the *FirstName* and *LastName* properties to ensure that they are not empty. It also inspects the *EmailAddress* and *Phone* properties to verify that they contain information that is in a valid format. The method

returns *true* if the data is valid and *false* otherwise. You will use this method when you create the *SaveChanges* command later in this exercise.

#### NOTE

The code that validates the *EmailAddress* and *Phone* properties performs regular expression matching by using the *Regex* class defined in the *System.Text.RegularExpressions* namespace. To use this class, you define a regular expression in a *Regex* object that specifies the pattern that the data should match, and then you invoke the *IsMatch* method of the *Regex* object with the data that you need to validate. For more information about regular expressions and the *Regex* class, visit the “Regular Expression Object Model” page on the Microsoft website at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/30wbz966>.

- **CopyCustomer.** The purpose of this method is to create a shallow copy of a *Customer* object. You will use it when you create the *EditCustomer* command, to make a copy of the original data of a customer before it is changed. If the user decides to discard the changes, those changes can simply be copied back from the copy made by this method.

- In Solution Explorer, expand the Customers project and double-click the *ViewModel.cs* file to open it in the Code and Text Editor window.
- In the *ViewModel.cs* file, expand the Methods For Fetching And Updating Data region. In this region, above the *ValidateCustomer* method, create the *Add* method shown here:

```
// Create a new (empty) customer
// and put the form into Adding mode
private void Add()
{
    Customer newCustomer = new Customer { CustomerID = 0 };
    this.customers.Insert(currentCustomer, newCustomer);
    this.IsAdding = true;
    this.OnPropertyChanged("Current");
}
```

This method creates a new *Customer* object. It is empty, apart from the *CustomerID* property, which is temporarily set to 0 for display purposes; the real value in this property is generated when the customer is saved to the database, as described earlier. The customer is added to the customers list (the view uses data-binding to display the data in this list), the *ViewModel* is placed in Adding

mode, and the *PropertyChanged* event is raised to indicate that the *Current* customer has changed.

- Add the following *Command* variable shown in bold to the list at the start of the *ViewModel* class:

```
public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public Command LastCustomer { get; private set; }
    public Command AddCustomer { get; private set; }
    ...
}
```

- In the *ViewModel* constructor, instantiate the *AddCustomer* command as shown here in bold:

```
public ViewModel()
{
    ...
    this.LastCustomer = new Command(this.Last, ...);
    this.AddCustomer = new Command(this.Add,
        () => { return this.CanBrowse; });
}
```

This code references the *Add* method that you just created. The command is enabled if the *ViewModel* has a connection to the web service and it is in Browsing mode (the *AddCustomer* command will not be enabled if the *ViewModel* is already in Adding mode).

- After the *Add* method in the Methods For Fetching And Updating Data region, create a private *Customer* variable called *oldCustomer* and define another method called *Edit*:

```
// Edit the current customer
// - save the existing details of the customer
// and put the form into Editing mode
private Customer oldCustomer;
private void Edit ()
{
    this.oldCustomer = new Customer();
    this.CopyCustomer(this.Current, this.oldCustomer);
}
```

```

        this.IsEditing = true;
    }

```

This method copies the details of the current customer to the *oldCustomer* variable and puts the ViewModel into Editing mode. In this mode, the user can change the details of the current customer. If the user subsequently decides to discard these changes, the original data can be copied back from the *oldCustomer* variable.

- Add the following *Command* variable shown in bold to the list at the start of the *ViewModel* class:

```

public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public Command AddCustomer { get; private set; }
    public Command EditCustomer { get; private set; }
    ...
}

```

- In the *ViewModel* constructor, instantiate the *EditCustomer* command as shown in bold in the following code:

```

public ViewModel()
{
    ...
    this.AddCustomer = new Command(this.Add, ...);
    this.EditCustomer = new Command(this.Edit,
        () => { return this.CanBrowse; });
}

```

This code is similar to the statement for the *AddCustomer* command, except that it references the *Edit* method.

- After the *Edit* method in the Methods For Fetching And Updating Data region, add the following method named *Discard* to the *ViewModel* class:

```

// Discard changes made while in Adding or Editing mode
// and return the form to Browsing mode
private void Discard ()
{
    // If the user was adding a new customer, then remove it
}

```

```

    if (this.IsAdding)
    {
        this.customers.Remove(this.Current);
        this.OnPropertyChanged("Current");
    }
    // If the user was editing an existing customer,
    // then restore the saved details
    if (this.IsEditing)
    {
        this.CopyCustomer(this.oldCustomer, this.Current);
    }
    this.IsBrowsing = true;
}

```

The purpose of this method is to make it possible for the user to discard any changes made when the ViewModel is in Adding or Editing mode. If the ViewModel is in Adding mode, the current customer is removed from the list (this is the new customer created by the *Add* method), and the *PropertyChanged* event is raised to indicate that the current customer in the customers list has changed. If the ViewModel is in Editing mode, the original details in the *oldCustomer* variable are copied back to the currently displayed customer. Finally, the ViewModel is returned to Browsing mode.

- Add the *DiscardChanges Command* variable to the list at the start of the *ViewModel* class, and update the constructor to instantiate this command, as shown here in bold:

```

public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public Command EditCustomer { get; private set; }
    public Command DiscardChanges { get; private set; }
    ...
    public ViewModel()
    {
        ...
        this.EditCustomer = new Command(this.Edit, ...);
        this.DiscardChanges = new Command(this.Discard,
            () => { return this.CanSaveOrDiscardChanges; });
    }
    ...
}

```

Notice that the *DiscardChanges* command is only enabled if the *CanSaveOrDiscardChanges* property is *true*; the ViewModel has a connection to the web service and the ViewModel is in Adding or Editing mode.

- In the Methods For Fetching And Updating Data region, after the *Discard* method, add one more method, named *SaveAsync*, as shown in the code that follows. This method should be marked as *async*.

```
// Save the new or updated customer back to the web service
// and return the form to Browsing mode
private async void SaveAsync()
{
    // Validate the details of the Customer
    if (this.ValidateCustomer(this.Current))
    {
        // Only continue if the customer details are valid
        this.IsBusy = true;
        try
        {
            // If the user is adding a new customer,
            // send an HTTP POST request to the web service with the details
            if (this.IsAdding)
            {
                var response =
                    await client.PostAsJsonAsync("api/customers", this.Current);
                if (response.IsSuccessStatusCode)
                {
                    // TODO: Display the details of the new customer
                }
                // TODO: Handle POST failure
            }
            // The user must be editing an existing customer,
            // so send the details by using a PUT request
            else
            {
                string path = string.Format("api/customers/{0}",
                    this.Current.CustomerID);
                var response = await client.PutAsJsonAsync(path, this.Current);
                if (response.IsSuccessStatusCode)
                {
                    this.IsEditing = false;
                    this.IsBrowsing = true;
                }
                // TODO: Handle PUT failure
            }
        }
    }
}
```

```

    }
    catch (Exception e)
    {
        // TODO: Handle exceptions
    }
    finally
    {
        this.IsBusy = false;
    }
}
}

```

This method is not yet complete. The initial code that you have just entered verifies that the customer details are valid. If they are, the details can be saved, and the *IsBusy* property of the ViewModel is set to *true* to indicate that this can take some time while the information is sent over the network to the web service (remember that the *IsActive* property of *ProgressRing* control on the Customers form is bound to this property, and the progress ring will display while the data is being saved).

The code in the *try* block determines whether the user is adding a new customer or editing the details of an existing customer. If the user is adding a new customer, the code uses the *PostAsJsonAsync* method of the *HttpClient* object to send a POST message to the web service. Remember that the POST request is sent to the *PostCustomer* method in the *CustomersController* class in the web service, and this method expects a *Customer* object as its parameter. The details are transmitted in JSON format.

If the user is editing an existing customer, the app calls the *PutAsJsonAsync* method of the *HttpClient* object. This method generates a PUT request which is passed to the *PutCustomer* method in the *CustomersController* class in the web service. The *PutCustomer* method updates the details of the customer in the database, and expects the customer ID and customer details as parameters. Again, this data is transmitted to the web service in JSON format.

When the data has been sent, the *isBusy* property is set to false, which causes the *ProgressRing* control to disappear from the display.

- In the *SaveAsync* method, replace the comment *// TODO: Display the details of the new customer* with the following code shown in bold:



```

if (response.IsSuccessStatusCode)
{
    // Get the ID of the newly created customer and display it
    Uri customerUri = response.Headers.Location;
    var newCust = await this.client.GetAsync(customerUri);
    if (newCust.IsSuccessStatusCode)
    {
        var customerData = await newCust.Content.ReadAsAsync<Customer>();
        this.CopyCustomer(customerData, this.Current);
        this.OnPropertyChanged("Current");
        this.IsAdding = false;
        this.IsBrowsing = true;
    }
    else
    {
        // TODO: Handle GET failure
    }
}

```

The *CustomerID* column in the Customer table in the *AdventureWorks* database contains automatically generated values. The user does not provide a value for this data when creating a customer; rather the database generates the value itself when a customer is added to the database. In this way, the database can ensure that each customer has a unique customer ID. Therefore, after you have sent the POST request to the web service, you must send a GET request to obtain the customer ID. Fortunately, the *HttpResponseMessage* object passed back by the web service as the result of the POST request contains a URL that an app can use to query the new data. This URL is available in the *Headers.Location* property of the response, and it will have the form *api/Customers/n* where *n* is the ID of the customer. The code that you have just added sends a GET request to this URL by using the *GetAsync* method of the *HttpClient* object, and reads the data back for the new customer by using the *ReadAsAsync* method of the response. The code then updates the details of the customer held in the customers collection with this data.

#### NOTE

It might look like this code is performing an unnecessary round-trip to the web service to fetch the customer ID, which is available in the *Headers.Location* property of the response message from the POST request. However, this step verifies that the data has been saved correctly, and there might well be other fields which are transformed by the web service when the data is

saved, so this process ensures that the app displays the data as it appears in the database.

- In Solution Explorer, in the Controllers folder, open the `CustomersController.cs` file and display it in the Code and Text Editor window.
- In the *PostCustomer* method, before the statements that save the new customer in the database, add the following code shown in bold.

```
// POST api/Customers
public HttpResponseMessage PostCustomer(Customer customer)
{
    if (ModelState.IsValid)
    {
        customer.ModifiedDate = DateTime.Now;
        customer.rowguid = Guid.NewGuid();
        db.Customers.Add(customer);
        db.SaveChanges();
        ...
    }
}
```

The Customer table in the *AdventureWorks* database has some additional requirements; specifically, if you are adding or editing a customer, you should set the *ModifiedDate* property of the customer to reflect the date on which the change was made. Additionally, if you are creating a new customer, you must populate the *rowguid* property of the *Customer* object with a new GUID before you can save it (this is a mandatory column in the Customer table; other apps inside the Adventure Works organization use this column to track information about customers).

#### NOTE

GUID stands for globally unique identifier. A GUID is a string, generated by Windows, that is almost guaranteed to be unique (there is a very small possibility that Windows might generate a nonunique GUID, but the possibility is so infinitesimally small that it can be discounted). GUIDs are frequently used by databases as key values used to identify individual rows, as in the case of the Customer table in the *AdventureWorks* database.

- In the *PutCustomer* method, update the *ModifiedDate* property of the

customer before the statement that indicates that the customer has been modified, as shown here in bold:

```
// PUT api/Customers/5
public HttpResponseMessage PutCustomer(Int32 id, Customer customer)
{
    ...
    customer.ModifiedDate = DateTime.Now;
    db.Entry(customer).State = EntityState.Modified;
    ...
}
```

- Return to the *ViewModel* class in the Code and Text Editor window.
- Add the *SaveChanges* Command variable to the list at the start of the *ViewModel* class, and update the constructor to instantiate this command, as shown in the following:

```
public class ViewModel : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    ...
    public Command DiscardChanges { get; private set; }
    public Command SaveChanges { get; private set; }
    ...
    public ViewModel()
    {
        ...
        this.DiscardChanges = new Command(this.Discard, ...);
        this.SaveChanges = new Command(this.SaveAsync, () =>
            { return this.CanSaveOrDiscardChanges; });
    }
    ...
}
```

- On the Build menu, click Build Solution and verify that your app compiles without any errors.

## Reporting errors and updating the UI

You have added the commands by which a user can retrieve, add, edit, and save customer information. However, if something goes wrong and an error occurs, the user is not going to know what has happened. This is because the *ViewModel* class does not include any error reporting capabilities. One way to add such a

feature is to capture the exception messages that occur and expose them as a property of the *ViewModel* class. A view can use data-binding to connect to this property and display the error messages.

Add error reporting to the *ViewModel* class

1. In the *ViewModel.cs* file, expand the region named Properties For “Busy” And Error Message Handling.
2. After the *IsBusy* property, add the private *\_lastError* string variable and public *LastError* string property shown here:

```
private string _lastError = null;
public string LastError
{
    get { return this._lastError; }
    private set
    {
        this._lastError = value;
        this.OnPropertyChanged("LastError");
    }
}
```

3. In the Methods For Fetching And Updating Data region, find the *GetDataAsync* method. This method contains the following exception handler:

```
catch (Exception e)
{
    // TODO: Handle exceptions
}
```

4. After the *// TODO: Handle errors* comment, add the following code shown in bold:

```
catch (Exception e)
{
    // TODO: Handle exceptions
    this.LastError = e.Message;
}
```

5. In the *else* block immediately preceding the exception handler, after the //

*TODO: Handle GET failure* comment, add the following code shown in bold:

```
else
{
    // TODO: Handle GET failure
    this.LastError = response.ReasonPhrase;
}
```

The *ReasonPhrase* property of the *HttpResponseMessage* object contains a string indicating the reason for the failure reported by the web service.

6. At the end of the *if* block, immediately preceding the *else* block, add the following statement shown in bold:

```
if
{
    ...
    this.IsAtEnd = (this.customers.Count == 0);
    this.LastError = String.Empty;
}
else
{
    this.LastError = response.ReasonPhrase;
}
```

This statement removes any error messages from the *LastError* property.

7. Find the *ValidateCustomer* method, and add the following statement shown in bold immediately before the *return* statement:

```
private bool ValidateCustomer(Customer customer)
{
    ...
    this.LastError = validationErrors;
    return !hasErrors;
}
```

The *ValidateCustomer* method populates the *validationErrors* variable with information about any properties in the *Customer* object that contain invalid data. The statement that you have just added copies this

information to the *LastError* property.

8. Find the *SaveAsync* method. In this method, add the following code shown in bold to catch any errors and HTTP web service failures:

```
private async void SaveAsync()
{
    // Validate the details of the Customer
    if (this.ValidateCustomer(this.Current))
    {
        ...
        try
        {
            // If the user is adding a new customer,
            // send an HTTP POST request to the web service with the details
            if (this.IsAdding)
            {
                ...
                if (response.IsSuccessStatusCode)
                {
                    ...
                    if (newCust.IsSuccessStatusCode)
                    {
                        ...
                        this.IsBrowsing = true;
                        this.LastError = String.Empty;
                    }
                }
                else
                {
                    // TODO: Handle GET failure
                    this.LastError = response.ReasonPhrase;
                }
            }
            // TODO: Handle POST failure
        }
        else
        {
            this.LastError = response.ReasonPhrase;
        }
    }
    // The user must be editing an existing customer,
    // so send the details by using a PUT request
    else
    {
        ...
        if (response.IsSuccessStatusCode)
        {
```

```

        this.IsEditing = false;
        this.IsBrowsing = true;
        this.LastError = String.Empty;
    }
    // TODO: Handle PUT failure
    else
    {
        this.LastError = response.ReasonPhrase;
    }
}
}
catch (Exception e)
{
    // TODO: Handle exceptions
    this.LastError = e.Message;
}
finally
{
    this.IsBusy = false;
}
}
}

```

- Find the *Discard* method, and add the statement shown here in bold to the end of this method:

```

private void Discard()
{
    ...
    this.LastError = String.Empty;
}

```

- On the Build menu, click Build Solution and verify that the app builds without any errors.

The ViewModel is now complete. The final stage is to incorporate the new commands, state information, and error reporting features into the view provided by the Customers form.

Integrate add and edit functionality into the Customers form

- Open the MainPage.xaml file in the Design View window.

The XAML markup for the *MainPage* form has already been modified, and the following *TextBlock* controls have been added to the *Grid* controls

that display the data:

```
<Page
  x:Class="Customers.MainPage"
  ...>
  <Grid Style="{StaticResource GridStyle}">
    ...
    <Grid x:Name="customersTabularView" ...>
      ...
      <Grid Grid.Row="2">
        ...
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="3" Grid.RowSpan="4"
Grid.Column="7" Style="{StaticResource ErrorMessageStyle}"/>
      </Grid>
    </Grid>
    <Grid x:Name="customersColumnarView" Margin="20,10,20,110" ...>
      ...
      <Grid Grid.Row="1">
        ...
        <TextBlock Grid.Row="6" Grid.Column="0"
Grid.ColumnSpan="2" Style="{StaticResource ErrorMessageStyle}"/>
      </Grid>
    </Grid>
    ...
  </Grid>
  ...
</Page>
```

The *ErrorMessageStyle* referenced by these *TextBlock* controls is defined in the AppStyles.xaml file.

2. Set the *Text* property of both *TextBlock* controls to bind to the *LastError* property of the ViewModel, as shown here in bold:

```
...
<TextBlock Grid.Row="3" Grid.RowSpan="4" Grid.Column="7"
Style="{StaticResource ErrorMessageStyle}" Text="{Binding LastError}"/>
...
<TextBlock Grid.Row="6" Grid.Column="0" Grid.ColumnSpan="2"
Style="{StaticResource ErrorMessageStyle}" Text="{Binding LastError}"/>
```

3. The *TextBox* and *ComboBox* controls on the form that display customer data should only allow the user to modify this data if the ViewModel is in



Adding or Editing mode; otherwise, they should be disabled. Add the *IsEnabled* property to each of these controls, and bind it to the *IsAddingOrEditing* property of the ViewModel as follows:

```
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="id"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
<ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="3" x:Name="title"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" ...>
</ComboBox>
<TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="5" x:Name="firstName"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
<TextBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="7" x:Name="lastName"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="3" ... x:Name="email"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="3" ... x:Name="phone"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
...
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="0" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cId" />
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
<ComboBox Grid.Row="1" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cTitle"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" ...>
</ComboBox>
<TextBox Grid.Row="2" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cFirstName"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
<TextBox Grid.Row="3" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cLastName"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="4" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cEmail"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
...
<TextBox Grid.Row="5" Grid.Column="1" x:Name="cPhone"
IsEnabled="{Binding IsAddingOrEditing}" .../>
```

4. Add an app bar to the bottom of the page, immediately after the top app bar, using the *<Page.BottomAppBar>* element. This app bar should contain buttons for the *AddCustomer*, *EditCustomer*, *SaveChanges*, and *DiscardChanges* commands, as follows:

```
<Page ...>
```

```

...
<Page.TopAppBar >
    ...
</Page.TopAppBar>
<Page.BottomAppBar>
    <AppBar IsSticky="True">
        <Grid>
            <StackPanel Orientation="Horizontal"
HorizontalAlignment="Right">
                <AppBarButton x:Name="addCustomer"
Icon="Add" Command="{Binding Path=AddCustomer}">
                <AppBarButton x:Name="editCustomer"
Icon="Edit" Command="{Binding Path=EditCustomer}">
                <AppBarButton x:Name="saveChanges"
Icon="Save" Command="{Binding Path=SaveChanges}">
                <AppBarButton x:Name="discardChanges"
Icon="Undo" Command="{Binding Path=DiscardChanges}">
            </StackPanel>
        </Grid>
    </AppBar>
</Page.BottomAppBar>
</Page>

```

Note that the convention for commands on the bottom app bar is to group them together, starting on the right side. The icons referenced by the buttons are the standard images provided with the Windows Store App template.

### Test the Customers app

1. On the Debug menu, click Start Debugging to build and run the app.  
When the Customers form appears, notice that the *TextBox* and *ComboBox* controls are disabled. This is because the view is in Browsing mode.
2. Right-click the form and verify that the upper and lower app bars both appear.

You can use the First, Next, Previous, and Last buttons in the upper app bar as before (remember that the First and Previous buttons will not be enabled until you move away from the first customer). In the lower app bar, the Add and Edit buttons should be enabled, but the Save and Discard buttons should be disabled. This is because the *AddCustomer* and

*EditCustomer* commands are enabled when the ViewModel is in Browsing mode, and the *SaveChanges* and *DiscardChanges* commands are only enabled when the ViewModel is in Adding or Editing mode.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for 'Adventure Works Customers'. The title 'Adventure Works Customers' is displayed in a blue, handwritten-style font at the top. Below the title is a form with a dark blue background. The form contains the following fields:

| ID | Title | First Name | Last Name |
|----|-------|------------|-----------|
| 1  | Mr    | Orlando    | Gee       |

Below the table, there are two more fields:

Email: orlando0@adventure-works.com

Phone: 245-555-0173

The app has a top navigation bar with four icons: First, Previous, Next, and Last. The bottom navigation bar has four icons: Add, Edit, Save, and Discard.

3. In the bottom app bar, click Edit.
4. The buttons in the top app bar become disabled because the ViewModel is now in Editing mode. Additionally, the Add and Edit buttons are also disabled, but the Save and Discard buttons should be enabled. Furthermore, the data entry fields on the form should now be enabled, and the user can modify the details of the customer.

The screenshot shows a software application titled "Adventure Works Customers" displayed on a wooden-textured background. At the top, there is a navigation bar with four icons: "First", "Previous", "Next", and "Last". The main content area features a form with a blue header and white input fields. The form has four columns: "ID", "Title", "First Name", and "Last Name". The "ID" field contains the value "1". The "Title" field is a dropdown menu showing "Mr". The "First Name" field contains "Orlando". The "Last Name" field contains "Gee". Below the header, there are two more input fields: "Email" with the value "orlando0@adventure-works.com" and "Phone" with the value "245-555-0173". At the bottom of the application, there is a dark bar with four icons: "Add", "Edit", "Save", and "Discard".

| ID | Title | First Name | Last Name |
|----|-------|------------|-----------|
| 1  | Mr    | Orlando    | Gee       |

Email: orlando0@adventure-works.com

Phone: 245-555-0173

5. Modify the details of the customer: blank out the first name, type **Test** for the email address, type **Test 2** for the phone number, and then click Save.

These changes violate the validation rules implemented by the *ValidateCustomer* method. The *ValidateCustomer* method populates the *LastError* property of the ViewModel with validation messages, and they are displayed on the form in the *TextBlock* that binds to the *LastError* property:

Click Discard, and verify that the original data is reinstated on the form, the validation messages disappear, and the ViewModel reverts to Browsing mode.

- Click Add. The fields on the form should be emptied (apart from the ID field, which displays the value 0). Enter the details for a new customer. Be sure to provide a first name and last name, a valid email address of the form *name@organization.com*, and a numeric phone number (you can also include parentheses, hyphens, and spaces).
- Click Save. If the data is valid (there are no validation errors), your data should be saved to the database. You should see the ID generated for the new customer in the ID field, and the ViewModel should switch back to Browsing mode.
- Experiment with the app and try adding and editing more customers. Notice that you can resize the view to display the columnar layout and the form should still work.
- When you have finished, return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to use the Entity Framework to create an entity

model that you can use to connect to a SQL Server database. You also saw how to create a REST web service that a Windows Store app can use to query and update data in the database through the entity model, and you learned how to integrate code that calls the web service into a ViewModel.

You have now completed all the exercises in this book. Hopefully, you are thoroughly conversant with the C# language and understand how to use Visual Studio 2013 to build professional apps for Windows 7 and for Windows 8.1. However, this is not the end of the story. You have jumped the first hurdle, but the best C# programmers learn from continued experience, and you can gain this experience only by building C# apps. As you do so, you will discover new ways to use the C# language and the many features available in Visual Studio 2013 that I have not had space to cover in this book. Also, remember that C# is an evolving language. Back in 2001, when I wrote the first edition of this book, C# introduced the syntax and semantics necessary to build apps that made use of Microsoft .NET Framework 1.0. Some enhancements were added to Visual Studio and .NET Framework 1.1 in 2003, and then in 2005, C# 2.0 emerged with support for generics and .NET Framework 2.0. C# 3.0 added numerous features such as anonymous types, lambda expressions, and, most significantly, LINQ. C# 4.0 extended the language further with support for named arguments, optional parameters, contra and covariant interfaces, and integration with dynamic languages. C# 5.0 has added full support for asynchronous processing through the *async* keyword and the *await* operator.

In parallel with the evolution of the C# programming language, the Windows operating system has changed considerably since the first edition of this book. Arguably, the changes instigated by Windows 8 and augmented in Windows 8.1 have been the most radical in this period, and developers familiar with earlier editions of Windows now have exciting new challenges to build apps for the modern, touch-centric, mobile platform that Windows 8.1 provides. Visual Studio 2013 and C# will undoubtedly be instrumental in assisting you to address these challenges.

What will the next version of C# and Visual Studio bring? Watch this space!

## Quick reference

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

| To  | Do this   |
|---|---|
| Create an entity model by using the Entity Framework  | Add a new item to your project by using the ADO.NET Entity Data Model template. Use the Entity Data Model to connect to the database containing the tables that you want to model and select the tables that your app requires.   |
| Create a REST web service that provides remote access to a database through an entity model | Create an ASP.NET project using the Web API template. Run the Add Scaffold wizard and select Web API 5 Controller with read/write actions, using Entity Framework. Specify the name of the appropriate entity class from the entity model as the <i>Model</i> class, and the data context class for the entity model as the <i>Data</i> context class.  |
| Consume a REST web service in a Windows Store app   | <p>Add the ASP.NET Web Client Libraries to the project and use an <i>HttpClient</i> object to connect to the database. Set the <i>BaseAddress</i> property of the <i>HttpClient</i> object to reference the address of the web service. For example:</p> <pre>string ServerUrl = "http://localhost:50000/"; HttpClient client = new HttpClient(); client.BaseAddress = new Uri(ServerUrl);</pre>  |
| Retrieve data from a REST web service in a Windows Store app                                | <p>Call the <i>GetAsync</i> method of the <i>HttpClient</i> object and specify the URL of the resource to access. If the <i>GetAsync</i> method is successful, fetch the data by using the <i>ReadAsStringAsync</i> method of the <i>HttpResponseMessage</i> object returned by the <i>GetAsync</i> method. For example:</p> <pre>HttpClient client = ...; var response = await     client.GetAsync("api/customers"); if (response.IsSuccessStatusCode) {     var customerData = await         response.Content.             ReadAsStringAsync&lt;IEnumerable&lt;Customer&gt;&gt;();     ... } else {     // GET failed }</pre> |
| Add a new data item to a REST web service from a Windows Store app                          | Use the <i>PostAsJsonAsync</i> method of the <i>HttpClient</i> object and specify the new item to create and the URL of the collection to hold this item as parameters. Examine the status of the <i>HttpResponseMessage</i> object returned by <i>PostAsJsonAsync</i> to verify that the POST operation succeeded. For example:  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <pre> HttpClient client = ...; Customer newCustomer = ...; var response = await client.PostAsJsonAsync(     "api/customers", newCustomer); if (!response.IsSuccessStatusCode) {     // POST failed } </pre>   |
| Update an existing item in a REST web service from a Windows Store app | <p>Use the <i>PutAsJsonAsync</i> method of the <i>HttpClient</i> object and specify the item to update and the URL of this item as parameters. Examine the status of the <i>HttpResponseMessage</i> object returned by <i>PostAsJsonAsync</i> to verify that the PUT operation succeeded. For example:</p> <pre> HttpClient client = ...; Customer updatedCustomer = ...; string path = string.Format("api/customers/{0}",     updatedCustomer.CustomerID); var response = await client.PutAsJsonAsync(     path, updatedCustomer); if (!response.IsSuccessStatusCode) {     // PUT failed } </pre> |



# Appendix A. About the author

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**JOHN SHARP** is a principal technologist working for Content Master, a division of CM Group Ltd in the United Kingdom. The company specialises in advanced learning solutions for large international organisations, often utilising the latest and most innovative technologies to deliver effective learning outcomes. John gained an honors degree in Computing from Imperial College, London. He has been developing software and writing training courses, guides,

and books for over 27 years. John has extensive experience in a range of technologies, from database systems and UNIX to C, C++, and C# applications for the .NET Framework.

He has also written about Java and JavaScript development, and designing enterprise solutions by using Windows Azure. Apart from seven editions of *Microsoft Visual C# Step By Step*, he has penned several other books, including *Microsoft Windows Communication Foundation Step By Step* and the *J# Core Reference*. In his role at Content Master he is a regular author for *Microsoft Patterns & Practices*, and has recently worked on guides such as *Building Hybrid Applications in the Cloud on Windows Azure*, and *Data Access for Highly Scalable Solutions Using SQL, NoSQL, and Polyglot Persistence*.

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A link in an index entry is displayed as the section title in which that entry appears. Because some sections have multiple index markers, it is not unusual for an entry to have several links to the same section. Clicking on any link will take you directly to the place in the text in which the marker appears.

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# Microsoft Visual C# 2013 Step by Step

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